

The Rhetoric of Urban Renewal:
Redevelopment in Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District

BY

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Abstract:

Cities throughout the United States have attempted to rehabilitate their neglected urban neighborhoods. These efforts have been the result of rhetorical struggles that involve the stakeholders of the neighborhoods – residents, governments and businesses. In this dissertation, I argue that the rhetoric surrounding contemporary urban renewal efforts has been constrained by the neoliberal occupational psychosis. I specifically examine how the discourses of these stakeholders have shaped the identity, infrastructure, and resources of the Crossroads Arts District, an urban neighborhood in Kansas City. This neighborhood was founded by artists who were seeking affordable spaces for living and working. However, this identity changed when developers began building upscale condominiums and apartments within the neighborhood. This change can be attributed to what Maurice Charland (1987) calls constitutive rhetoric. As the neighborhood was populated, its infrastructure also evolved. In doing so, the city strived to establish what Michel de Certeau (1984) refers to as a place. Not only did the city shape the neighborhood's infrastructure, but it also provided tax incentives for developers. To receive these incentives developers relied on what Aune (2001) calls "the rhetoric of economic correctness."

Acknowledgements

I arrived at this project with many ideas related to how communities are formed discursively. In a perfect world, this dissertation would have covered the entire breadth of my interests. Fortunately, I benefitted from a wise committee that suggested I focus on only one community. This dissertation also benefitted immensely from the insights, patience and enthusiasm of my advisor, Jay Childers. Finally, I would like to thank my wife for her support throughout my studies.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation explores the relationship between humans and their communities. This relationship is largely based on the interconnection of rhetoric, culture and policy. Societies come to accept notions of the good community and shape policies that will help them achieve it. These policies, in turn, shape community – the structures and infrastructure humans impose upon nature. Ultimately the community is a reification of societal aspirations, which were formed themselves through earlier assumptions of what amounted to the good community.

Community itself is also rhetorical because it suggests a people's notion of the ideal community. Such ideals have long oscillated between dense population centers and sparse rural environments. Those who encourage population density view humans as part of a larger societal organism. This view was articulated by Aristotle in *Politics* when he wrote, “[t]he proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole” (p. 4). For Aristotle, people should live within close proximity and work in concert. In fact, Aristotle believed that “... he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of the state” (p. 4). Millenia later, Thomas Paine expressed similar sentiments about society. In the *Rights of Man*, Paine (2003) asserted, “man is so naturally a creature of society, that it is almost impossible to put him out of it” (p. 140). Paine believed that individuals needed others to reach their full potential. Paine stated that, “[i]n all cases [nature] made his natural wants greater than his individual powers” (p. 139). When Tocqueville (2001) visited the U.S. in the 1800s, he observed such societal organisms in the northeastern U.S. He was amazed by the level of direct democracy on display in town hall meetings. However, in the southern U.S. Tocqueville found a very different situation. He

remarked that the southern “[t]owns have fewer officials, rights, and duties. The people do not exert as direct an influence on affairs. Town meetings are less frequent and deal with a narrower range of issues. Hence the power of elected officials is greater, and that of the voters smaller; the community spirit is less aroused and less powerful.” (2001, p. 90). What Tocqueville found in the south was a lifestyle that privileged the individual, detached from the larger society. Rather than being part of the collaborative societal organism, the individual was atomized.

In a rural setting, the atomized model might be natural or even necessary. Expansive farms keep citizens separated, necessitating more reliance on family and self. What is surprising is that this model has come to represent many Americans’ notions of the ideal community. It is surprising because the nation has become increasingly urban since the industrial revolution. The countryside has been depleted, while U.S. metropolitan areas continue to grow. This tension between rural ideals and urban reality has been mitigated by the proliferation of suburban space. These spaces, where most Americans now live, are premised on the duality of big city amenities and rural privacy. This process has certainly been facilitated by improvements in transportation, but that is not the entire story. As Kenneth T. Jackson (1985) notes, Americans have eagerly embraced the inconveniences of commuting in order to own single-family homes, but he also notes that U.S. housing policy, both governmental and private sector, has been biased toward the suburban model.

Suburban community now exists as a balance between the urban and rural models of communal life. Yet in the twenty-first century, various groups have begun to question this notion. These groups argue that U.S. cities need to reinvigorate their neglected urban cores. More important, these urban renewal advocates argue that people need to live closer together.

This argument for population density is in stark contrast to the ideal of an atomized society. Despite the considerable exigencies, many of these urban renewal projects have been successful.

The success of urban renewal movements coincides with a growing interest in reforming community throughout the U.S. By the late 20th century some began to question the suburban lifestyle as potentially atomizing. In his 2000 *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam argues that civic engagement has decreased dramatically. One of the culprits, he argues, is the sprawl associated with suburbia. He divides this into three smaller reasons: “sprawl takes time,” “sprawl is associated with increasing social segregation” and “sprawl disrupts community ‘boundedness’” (2000, p. 214). During the same period, John F. Freie (1998) struck upon a similar theme. He contended that suburban development patterns had fostered “counterfeit communities,” businesses and organizations that sold consumers chain restaurants and sprawling, gated neighborhoods in the guise of authentic community. With community on the decline, a variety of solutions were proposed. Some believed the nascent Internet could bring people together. Others believed that the market would provide a solution through commercial third places. Still others believed that large faith organizations, commonly called megachurches, could reinvigorate community.

Among the first to promote online community was Nicholas Negroponte. In a 1996 article for *Wired* magazine, Negroponte argued that the Internet would allow one to transcend her physical neighborhood and suggested that the notion of “being local” would be radically changed. Negroponte ended his article with a refrain for the Internet age: “[b]eing local will be determined by: what we think and say, when we work and play, where we earn and pay” (Negroponte, 1996, November). Of course, this view ignored the inextricable reality of the physical world. This perspective also further insulated individuals from the issues of others in

their immediate communities. As Lawrence Lessig recently stated, “from the standpoint of society, it would be terrible if citizens could simply tune out problems that were not theirs. Those same citizens have to select leaders to manage these very problems” (1999, p. 180). While the Internet insulated its users, commercial third places appeared to push people back into the public sphere.

The term “third place” can be traced back to a 1982 essay, titled simply “The Third Place,” published in the journal *Qualitative Sociology*. The authors were concerned that “[t]he range of available arenas for social participation has narrowed to the point that for many people life has come to offer a very restrictive two-stop model of daily existence” (Oldenburg & Brissett, p. 266). To improve the overall quality of life, people needed places to go beyond their two stops – workplaces and homes. Furthermore, the authors believed these third places should be sites of unplanned association. In the late 1990s, commercial chains attempted to fill this niche. The most notable example of this has been the Starbucks chain of coffee shops, which actually uses the term “third place” when describing itself (Our Heritage, n.d.). In contrast to fast food chains, Starbucks-style coffee shops offer an environment conducive to lingering. However, Starbucks and many of its peers are nationally-administered chains, an arrangement that separates them from the communities in which they reside. They are also frequently found within the sprawl of suburbia. The casual dining chain Applebee’s also offers community through its slogan “Eatin’ Good in the Neighborhood,” but Applebee’s, Starbucks and other chain restaurants are not typically located in neighborhoods. As Freie (1998) suggests, neighborhood bars and coffee shops serve people from the immediate neighborhood. In a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, walking to the nearby bar or coffee shop is the rational choice. At neighborhood bars and coffee shops, one is likely to encounter her neighbors. This

may all seem like common sense, but consider how it changes when there are no true neighborhood bars or coffee shops. Instead, one commutes by car to a location that is not tied to a physical neighborhood. One cannot immediately assume the other patrons are her neighbors.

In a similar vein, the so-called “megachurch” has been viewed as a cure for the decline of community. Megachurches boast thousands of members, which allows them to offer a range of services and interest groups. Congregants have access to affinity groups, coffee shops, dry cleaners, etc. Within the sprawling campuses of these megachurches, one finds many elements of a neighborhood. Yet these are not neighborhood churches. Congregants often commute long distances to attend services and other church activities, making church one more destination, far removed from immediate locations. And according to some (Twitchell, 2004), megachurches are far closer to companies selling services and products than to places fostering community.

While many see the Internet, commercial third places and megachurches as solutions to suburbia, they can all exist within a suburban environment, perhaps even exacerbating the “sprawl civic penalty” (Putnam, 2000). A much different approach to the decline of community is urban renewal. Urban renewal involves breathing life back into deserted urban cores throughout the U.S. It is a movement that clashes with over a century of suburban policies and suburban culture. The success of urban renewal efforts throughout the U.S. is remarkable because it is contrary to many of the explicit and implicit societal norms. Much of the success some urban renewal efforts have achieved can be attributed to the rhetoric used to promote it.

In this dissertation I consider an instance of successful urban renewal rhetoric. Specifically, I focus upon the Crossroads Arts District neighborhood in Kansas City. There, a disparate group of people, initially artists and later entrepreneurs, transformed a warehouse district into a vibrant urban neighborhood. As the neighborhood evolved, suburban ideals and

the policies shaped by them lurked in the background. This exigence, which I call the specter of suburbia, was only conquered through adherence to neoliberal economic principles. This adherence can be tracked in three areas of urban renewal discourse. First, the inhabitants and potential inhabitants of the neighborhood were presented as a desirable creative class. Second, the pedestrian infrastructure, a stark contrast to the suburban ideal, was presented as an economic development tool. And finally, government assistance was allotted based on predicted future economic activity, rather than serving the public good.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the ways in which rhetorics involved in the creation of Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District developed to overcome the assumptions of many residents and developers that most people were not willing to give up their rural ideals and suburban lives. Ultimately, a rhetorical analysis of these discourses can help reveal the dominance of neoliberal economic assumptions over community concerns, help other urban renewal advocates understand rhetorical appeals that can help them reach their goals, and explore the potential such discourse might have on the future of community revival.

This opening chapter sets the stage for this analysis and the conclusions to which it points. In the remainder of this chapter, I do the following: 1) offer a brief history of suburban culture and policy; 2) explain the term neoliberal occupational psychosis; 3) explain how neoliberal policies have influenced urban development; 4) offer a brief history of urban renewal efforts in Kansas City; 5) outline my critical method; and 6) preview the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

A Brief History of Suburbanization

It is impossible to understand the rhetoric of urban renewal, without first understanding the culture and policies that have rendered the U.S. a suburban nation. To be successful, urban

renewal efforts in the U.S. must deal with the specter of suburbia. At every moment, efforts to rejuvenate cities are haunted by an entrenched preference for suburban existence. This has not always been the case in the U.S. The suburban preference resulted from structural changes to housing and transportation, which led to a decline of urban cores throughout the country. In this section I first historicize suburban development, highlighting its pro-growth orientation. I then discuss how cities have attempted to remedy their declining urban cores through renewal efforts.

Suburbanization

Robert Fishman (1987) traces suburbanization back to England, specifically the cities of London and Manchester. In these cities, the new bourgeois class of merchants and industrialists had emerged by the late 1700s. Initially, the bourgeois kept their living and work spaces within close proximity, oftentimes in the same building. Fishman (1987) believes their eventual relocation to the country was about challenging the aristocracy, who inhabited country estates. While the newly-affluent moved closer to the aristocracy, they concurrently moved away from the urban poor. Unlike the aristocracy, the bourgeois still needed to work within the cities. Hence, the commuter lifestyle was established. These bourgeois country homes were more rhetorical than functional. The new middle class, that is, used property to communicate its ascendancy. Later this pattern would come to the U.S. – initially in New York and Philadelphia, but it would ultimately become the nation’s dominant community design (Fishman, 1987).

In a related argument, Hayden (2003) traces American suburbia back to the 1820s, but she notes that it proliferated with improved transportation options in later years. The horse drawn omnibus began this trajectory. Transportation improved further with the introduction of urban streetcar lines, which allowed neighborhoods to develop beyond the city. Interurban rail

lines allowed people to travel between cities within a reasonable timeframe. But in the 19th century and early 20th century, this suburban option was limited to relatively few people.

As the 20th century began, improved transportation infrastructure made it easier to live further from one's work place. The popularity of suburbia was evident by the middle of the century. A 1943 study noted that 35.5 percent of persons in 140 metro areas lived in the suburbs. The same study noted, moreover, that 17 percent of the entire U.S. population was living in suburbs (Harris, 1943). Furthermore, the study found that "[i]n 10 metropolitan districts more than 60 per cent of the total population live outside the political boundaries of the chief city" (p. 2). Suburbanization in the eastern U.S. was largely attributed to manufacturing, with many suburbs devoted to such enterprises. However, even in 1943, a concentration of professionals was found in the suburban sectors (Harris, 1943). As this new suburban middle class grew, it became increasingly segregated from the working class. A shop owner or factory owner could afford to live away from his workplace. His less affluent workers, meanwhile, continued to live within close proximity to their jobs.

In the second half of the twentieth century America's transportation infrastructure was increasingly individualized. This would in turn lead to a radical restructuring of the nation's urban areas, as cities gave way to polycentric metropolitan areas. Outlying suburban municipalities began to compete with core cities on all levels.

Post World War II suburbanization

The dominant theme of post-WWII suburbanization has been privatization. As the American middle class has expanded, more individuals have been able to afford single-family homes and personal automobiles. Such acquisitions are now taken for granted. However, the

idealized lifestyle of this period was, at least partially, the result of government actions (Jackson, 1985). As Harvard history professor Lizabeth Cohen (1996) explains,

Thanks to a shortage in urban housing, government subsidies in highway building and home construction or purchase, and pent-up consumer demand and savings, a new residential landscape began to take shape in metropolitan areas, with large numbers of people commuting into cities for work and then back to homes in the suburbs (p. 1051).

Here, the role of highway policy has been rather consequential. The infrastructure policy of the U.S. since World War II has privileged suburban development, while neglecting mass transit options more amenable to urban environments.

The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 sent a clear message about transportation in the U.S. The act called for an expansive network of taxpayer-funded roads, which was a massive subsidy to the automotive industry. The interstate system was originally justified on the basis of national defense (Voti, 1996), but it was ultimately a boon to all automobile-related industries. In his 1956 state of the union address, President Eisenhower presented the interstate system as the only viable solution to an alarming number of traffic fatalities. He noted that “[d]uring the past year over 38,000 persons lost their lives in highway accidents, while the fearful toll of injuries and property damage has gone on unabated” (Eisenhower, 1956, January 5). Eisenhower could have suggested a multimodal solution, involving mass and personal forms of transit. Instead, he insisted that “[i]f we are ever to solve our mounting traffic problem, the whole interstate system must be authorized as one project, to be completed approximately within the specified time” (ibid.). As such, Eisenhower tacitly accepted suburban, automobile-dominated development as the only viable option.

The interstate highway proposal was quite similar to what General Motors had proposed in its *Futurama* film, first shown at the 1939 World's Fair. This film offered a glimpse of 1960, when an expansive highway system would offer "safety" and "speed." This innovation, GM claimed, would allow individuals to enjoy more freedom than ever before. The film's narrator asserts how the interstate would emancipate the public:

Without tedious travel the advantages of living in a small town are within easy reach. Bring the people who live there into closer relations with all the world around. Over space man has begun to win victory. Space for living. Space for working. Space for play. All available for more people than ever before." (1939, *Futurama* captures the public's imagination)

The Interstate Highway Act did not perfectly resemble what GM envisioned, but it did demonstrate a "political and financial commitment to a car- and truck-based land transportation system" (Volti, 1996). It also unleashed new land development patterns. Previously, shopping centers needed to be located within walking distance of homes or transit stations. The highway system allowed uses to be segregated, a practice reinforced by FHA policies (Jackson, 1985). This use segregation was exemplified by the suburban shopping center.

The antecedent of the modern shopping center was J.C. Nichols's Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, which opened in 1923. This was one of the first shopping centers designed to accommodate personal automobiles (Jackson, 1996). American Studies professor Richard Longstreth (1992) states that as "[o]ne of the leading champions of the shopping center concept, Nichols argued for wide streets to permit diagonal parking and for keeping structures to a single story so as to avoid the potential for vehicular congestion" (p. 10). It is notable that the Country Club Plaza was only one of seven shopping centers Nichols developed within his larger Country

Club District (p. 10, n16), which sprawled over two states. Though Nichols is remembered as a “community builder,” these developments would set the stage for automobile-centered, low-rise development. In terms of establishing suburbia, Jackson (1985) argues that “[q]ualitatively, the most successful American developer was Jesse Clyde Nichols” (p. 177). While pedestrianism was still a concern in Nichols’ developments, his single-use, automobile-centered developments were precursors of post-WWII suburbia. One step further was the Park and Shop development in Washington, D.C., which opened in 1930. Unlike Nichols’ developments, the Park and Shop was *not* developed for nearby residents. Instead, it was situated in an area that received considerable automotive traffic and was not accessible to pedestrians (Longstreth, 1992). Like the modern shopping strip mall, the developer seemed to only envision customers arriving by automobile. The residential development patterns after World War II would necessitate these types of shopping islands. For the most part, suburban developments were strictly residential. For new residents, this was a challenge to their ontological security. As Cohen (1996) notes, “[n]ew suburbanites who had themselves grown up in urban neighborhoods walking to corner stores and taking public transportation to shop downtown were now contending with changed conditions. Only in the most ambitious suburban tracts built after the war did the developers incorporate retail stores into their plans” (p. 1051). Though they had moved to more idyllic surroundings, it was not without cost. In these postwar suburbs, goods were not as readily available. Retrieving even the simplest of goods required an automobile trip, rather than a short walk.

After World War II, shopping centers became a staple of the suburban landscape. In 1956, Victor Gruen opened the first enclosed, climate-controlled shopping center. The mall, as it came to be known, quickly proliferated throughout the U.S. These shopping structures

mimicked the town square, but they were under the control of private, undemocratic entities (Jackson, 1996). Shopping centers became destinations, rather than integral parts of a neighborhood. The centers were often beyond walking distance and not built for pedestrian access.

At the same time, the mixed-use neighborhood gave way to the residential subdivision. This new space was centered on private pursuits. The front porch had previously been a dominant feature of American homes, but it was replaced by the backyard deck. Instead of being pushed into the public sphere, homeowners were now free to create their own backyard worlds. The façade of the modern home was dominated by multi-car garages, rather than front porches (Freie, 1998).

As GM had predicted in 1939, humans were conquering the open spaces of the U.S. The 1980s saw increased development on the edges of metropolitan areas (Fiske, 1991). This trend continued in the 1990s, with people moving farther away from the urban cores (Tilove, 2001). This new step was deemed exurban, rather than simply suburban. This exurban movement led to polycentric metropolitan areas, or what Garreau (1991) calls “edge cities.” That is, the anchor city’s downtown was no longer the sole business center of a metropolitan area. In addition to shopping and residences, offices had also moved to the suburbs. This provided the chance for people to live even further on the periphery of metropolitan areas. It was now possible for one to commute from an exurban home to a suburban “edge city.” At the same time, the importance of a metropolitan area’s traditional anchor city was diminished. Perhaps the clearest example of suburban migration can be found in the St. Louis metropolitan area, where the city’s population has gone from 860,000 in 1950 (Saulny, 2007) to 319,000 in 2010. Meanwhile the suburbs of St. Louis have continued to grow (Gay and Robertson, 2011). Jackson (1985) notes that the

suburbanization of St. Louis can be attributed to the government policies that privileged white suburban neighborhoods of single-family homes.

Between the end of WWII and today, suburban and exurban spaces have proliferated across the United States. Driven by their rural ideal and encouraged by corporate and governmental changes, the American people made an exodus into these new communities during the last half of the 20th century. Meanwhile, the historic urban cores were experiencing decline. In the following section I consider how municipal leaders addressed this decline.

Dealing with urban decline

Urban renewal has been an ongoing project in the U.S. for many decades. As the peripheries thrived, urban municipal leaders attempted to save their declining urban cores. There have been two distinct approaches to this problem of urban decline. The first has involved partial acceptance of decline. This approach calls for making cities nice places to visit, but does not envision anyone wanting to live in them. The other approach calls for developing new mixed-use neighborhoods, where people reside, work and enjoy leisure activities. Gradually the former has given way to the latter.

Sociologist John Hannigan (1998) calls the destination approach to urban renewal the “Fantasy City.” The approach relies on destinations for suburbanites, such as shopping centers, office buildings and attractions. The city is rehabilitated in an economic sense, but it is filled with transient workers and tourists, rather than residents. This is an act of capitulation, wherein cities have surrendered residential development to suburban competitors and simply fought to remain relevant. At first, this meant holding onto other assets – workplaces and tourist attractions.

Over time, cities became more desperate, and in turn more creative, as their federal funding evaporated. Jason Hackworth (2007), professor of geography of urban planning, states that “[f]iscal outlays to cities were slashed during the Nixon and Reagan eras as the federal government slowly withdrew from its role in solving the ‘urban problem’” (p. 153). This led cities to become increasingly dependent on private developers, who often requested incentives. As Hackworth (2007) observes, “[t]ax abatements, land giveaways, and lax or nonexistent zoning became the modus operandi for cities across the United States. The downtown was by far the most active intra-urban theater for such activity” (p. 152). When developers came to town, they sought to produce large-scale projects. As stated above, these were places for visitors rather than residents (e.g., stadiums, arenas, convention centers, shopping centers, offices and various forms of amusement). Residential development, along with associated retail, did not factor large in this approach.

In contrast, some cities have attempted to wholly re-establish themselves. This has meant building or rebuilding neighborhoods. By neighborhood, I do not refer to the suburban subdivision. Neighborhood refers to a traditional pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development. These are places where people live, work and enjoy leisure time. Freie believes these neighborhoods produce “genuine public spaces,” which “act as leveling devices and serve to expand the possibilities of interaction among participants, whereas formal associations tend toward limitation, restriction, and exclusion. People are accepted not because of who they are but merely because they are members of the community” (p. 59). The infrastructure, aesthetics and regulations of suburban life preclude such an environment.

To be certain, urban renewal has not escaped criticism. This criticism can be divided into two categories. Some political conservatives believe the suburban trajectory should not be

reversed. One of these chief critics is Wendell Cox. Cox is a former member of the L.A. County Transportation Commission and was instrumental in the development of the city's light rail and subway lines (Wendell Cox Biographical Sketch). He later claimed to have supported the railway based on a "mistaken belief that rail transit would reduce traffic congestion" (Cox, 1998, November 16). Cox's criticism eventually expanded to the New Urban and Smart Growth movements, which both advocate for higher population densities and improved pedestrian infrastructure. Writing for the prominent conservative think tank, *The Heritage Foundation*, he has characterized the movement as "elitist" (Cox and Utt, 2003, September 12) and contrary to the American dream (Cox, 2002, July 2). A section of his Web site, *Demographia.com*, is titled "Urban Consolidation & Smart Growth: Destroying the Universal Dream." Under this heading, he offers arguments against land use regulations, even linking them to the 2008 financial crisis.

Another set of critics are interested in community, but they wonder if it is actually being achieved in urban renewal projects. Hannigan (1998) groups cultural districts, such as the focus of this project, within the "fantasy" elements of the "postmodern metropolis." Hackworth (2007) has noted that gentrification often accompanies urban renewal. Property values are increased, which might prove problematic for existing residents. Neither Hannigan nor Hackworth is focused on the efficacy of these urban renewal projects. Rather, they are concerned with how these projects affect the larger society. For example, Hackworth (2007) argues cities are now compelled to chase upper-middle class residents, while neglecting housing options for less-fortunate individuals.

Conversely, Richard Florida (2002) is less concerned with gentrification. He encourages cities to invest in the livability of neighborhoods, instead of attractions like professional sports. He specifically calls for "more fine-grained neighborhood improvements and lifestyle amenities

that attract and retain talented people” (p. 303). It is Florida’s argument that allows urban renewal to be placed within the neoliberal occupational psychosis. It is also this economic perspective that has driven recent urban renewal efforts, such as those in Kansas City’s Crossroads Arts District. As such, I turn now to a closer explanation of what I mean by neoliberal occupational psychosis.

The Neo-liberal Occupational Psychosis

There is a certain asynchronous quality to contemporary urban renewal. Its advocates may yearn for an earlier time, but they are constrained by social practices and policies of the present. There is an occupational psychosis that limits how development is discussed. By neo-liberal occupational psychosis, I mean something more than “business is popular.”

Occupational psychosis refers to a constellation of norms that orders society. Drawing on the work of John Dewey, Burke (1954) states that, “[r]oughly, the term corresponds to the Marxian doctrine that a society’s environment in the historical sense is synonymous with the society’s methods of production” (p. 38). To elaborate on the definition, he claims that if hunting is the basis for a society, then hunting would influence its marriage practices. He offers a variety of examples, such as the “investor” occupational psychosis. To be clear, occupational psychosis is about more than following the current zeitgeist. Rhetoric and agency are limited by implicit societal norms and explicit laws promulgated by official bodies.

In the case of the current study, rhetoric is constrained by consumer preferences (implicit norms) and municipal policies (explicit laws). Urban renewal must, that is, deal with an occupational psychosis oriented toward neo-liberal values. In his book *The Neoliberal City*, Hackworth (2007) explains neoliberalism as a policy “rooted in the ... trilogy of the individual, the market, and the noninterventionist state” (p. 10). Hackworth situates neoliberalism in

contrast to egalitarian liberalism. Egalitarian liberalism emerged in the twentieth century and allows for “justifiable” forms of state intervention. In contrast, “[n]eoliberalism, simply defined, is an ideological rejection of egalitarian liberalism in general and the Keynesian welfare state in particular, combined with a selective return to the ideas of classical liberalism” (p. 9).

Hackworth cites Hayek and Friedman as foundational thinkers within the neoliberal turn, because they both “argued that government should be used only sparingly and in very specific circumstances, rather than interfering within the marketplace” (p. 9). In the neoliberal view, the best thing the government can do is simply ensure free-trade. This has meant diminished federal funds for urban housing and infrastructure projects. As such, localities must find other sources of funding. On the one hand, they could appeal to voters. But voters are not often eager to raise taxes. A more common approach is to issue municipal bonds, which will be discussed below.

For Burke (1954), occupational psychosis was not merely a theory. He understood it as a pervasive and consequential force. This is exemplified in his description of a failed occupational psychosis:

There must be an agrarian psychosis as distinct from a metropolitan one, but today it is bastardized, or at least weakened, by its necessary acquiescence to the economic policies dictated by the great centers of population and finance. Taxation, interest, and the money crop have made impractical the barter mentality which once distinguished the agrarians; they are now simply the weakest, least effectual, most outlying members of the purchase economy. (p. 41)

In his openly Marxist vernacular, Burke describes domination. The farmers have fallen victim to hegemony and now live on the margins of the mainstream economy. This seems like a rather bleak conclusion that discounts the agency and ingenuity of humans. To be sure, domination is

real. However, humans also strive to defy their circumstances. That is, they determine what can be achieved within the existing rules (i.e., implicit societal norms and explicit laws). In the case of urban renewal, this means finding a way to operate within a neo-liberal occupational psychosis, with its implicit and explicit rules.

Implicit rules

By implicit rules, I refer to societal norms. In the present context, suburban America is normative. Living anywhere but suburbia makes one an outlier. As outlined above, this was accomplished gradually in an epoch spanning over a century. The gradualism of suburbanization makes it seem like a natural evolution, or telos. In fact, it does comport with the myth of the American frontier. The frontier myth has had much iteration within American culture, but starting anew has been a common frontier theme (Lee, 1995; Dorsey, 1996; McMullen, 1996). To the extent that suburbs are built from scratch, they seem to be frontiers. Lee (1995) claims that suburbs match a small-town version of the frontier myth. That is, they privilege small government. Lee also believes that there is a reverence for small businesses, but this seems contrary to the reality of suburban life where big-box stores and chains are commonplace. Regardless, there is a connection between small town and suburban life. A 2009 poll from the Pew Research Center asked Americans about their ideal living environment. The most common answer was “Small Town.” The same survey found that “Small Town” residents have the smallest share of respondents to express high community satisfaction. The pollsters explain that “Americans have always celebrated the values and lifestyle of the small town, even as an ever diminishing share has chosen to live in such communities” (Taylor and Morin, 2009, February 26).

Another implicit rule in contemporary metropolitan America is that social norms privilege transit by personal automobile. In many suburban areas, infrastructure makes pedestrianism and transit use difficult. However, pedestrianism and transit use are also prohibited by societal norms. Even if buses are available, there may be some shame in riding them. One must see herself as the *type* of person who rides the bus. These perceptions are reinforced by portrayals in popular media. Writing in the journal *Public Culture*, Langan (2001) considered how the film *Speed* characterized users of mass transportation, specifically bus riders: “They are almost entirely low-income people of color, with assorted others whose automobility is disabled by quasi-cognitive impairments: the white woman too nervous to drive the Los Angeles freeways, the white tourist who doesn’t know his way around” (p. 462). It is used by those people who are without an atomized form of transit and whose narratives are not attractive. By stepping on a bus, one steps into the role of the other.

Such implicit rules are important since one should not underestimate the need to belong, or at least to avoid being a pariah. Giddens (1984) believes that these unwritten rules are particularly powerful forces that regulate society. He specifically states that, “[l]aws, of course, are among the most strongly sanctioned types of social rules and in modern societies have formally prescribed gradations of retribution. However, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the strength of informally applied sanctions in respect of a variety of mundane daily practices” (p. 23). Continuing with the example of riding the bus, this experience may have clear benefits. For example, the bus rider is free to do a variety of things while not operating a motor vehicle. Advertisements for transit often employ rational argument, stating the benefits (e.g., saving money, increased free-time and decreased frustration). These benefits must compete against what is normal and expected. Such pro-transit arguments presume

potential riders to be rational actors. However, as Aune (2001) points out, “rational choice cannot account for the development of social norms” (p. 23). These social norms have made the suburban landscape seem like Americans’ natural habitat. However, such norms can be defied. In contrast, explicit rules are codified. To change these, or work within their confines, requires considerable creativity.

Explicit rules

In some instances the social norm against riding the bus has been subverted by explicit rules that reward bus riders. Explicit rules are those that are codified and enforced. These could be actual laws governing how funds are allocated. They could also be based on an economic understanding. For example, municipalities understand their behavior is monitored by bond-rating agencies. These explicit rules are frequently understood as punitive. That is, municipalities have the authority to punish those who violate codes. This arrangement has not always been useful for cities seeking economic development. Many cities are in an overtly desperate state. From this position of desperation, cities have offered incentives for good behavior. Rather than enforcing ideal building use, such goals are pursued through economic incentives. Returning to the example of the reluctant bus rider, there have been attempts to incentivize this behavior. One example would be tax breaks for transit users. In this case, the government is incentivizing the behavior. In another example, which exemplifies the neo-liberal occupational psychosis, private employers have offered incentives for transit users.

The combination of these implicit and explicit rules has created a context where individualism and economic-growth is privileged. Such norms and laws are quite consistent with suburban development. The neo-liberal occupational psychosis has stacked the deck in favor of suburban development, which is more conducive to laissez-faire governance. As such, urban

renewal is about more than aesthetics and infrastructure. It is about promoting a development style that is contrary to social norms and development practices. This is why rhetoric plays such a crucial role in urban renewal. The suburbs are accepted as the American Dream, so no argument is needed. But what compromises are made when urban renewal is adjusted to fit the neoliberal occupational psychosis?

The Neo-Liberal Urban Environment

With its tendency to atomize the American people, suburbia has attempted to produce some proxies for the commons, but success has been limited. Perhaps most notable has been the enclosed shopping mall, which was an early example of a commercial third place. When first conceived by Victor Gruen, the mall was to be a mixed-use community (Rushkoff, 1999). The actuality has been quite different, as the mall is solely a destination for shopping. It may present itself as a gathering place, but this is only a ruse to encourage consumption. Kenneth T. Jackson (1996) notes the deficiencies of privately owned shopping centers,

What happens, then, when citizens seek to exercise their constitutional right to petition the general public, to speak out about this or that outrage? A downtown street presents no constitutional problem, but urban sidewalks feature so few pedestrians that effective protest there is impossible. Shopping malls, by contrast, offer crowds but not access, because management typically prohibits activities that might be controversial or offensive. And private police forces stand ready to enforce such rules, and public-relations personnel are at the ready to justify them. (p. 1118)

In recent years, shopping malls have been on the wane. Instead, development has advanced in two opposite directions. In one direction there has been a proliferation of big-box stores which are mere destinations and do not purport to offer community. In other instances, developers

have offered “new urban” developments within the sprawl of suburbia. These developments are built to resemble traditional downtowns, even though the streets are sometimes privately owned. An example of this is Easton Town Center, near Columbus, Ohio, where a mixed-use development sits on private property. Writing for the National Endowment for the Arts, Robbins (in Smiley, 2002) noted that developers of these properties understand the public’s longing for community and capitalize on it. As such, “the lesson for citizens and professionals is that Easton and other similar spaces are designed wholly to make us good consumers and to engage us in a fantasy, which includes the participation in what appears to be a public realm” (p. 6). Developments of this sort are simulacra of downtowns. You may be able to walk to the store, but you may not be able to organize a protest outside the store. A tightly-controlled private environment only carries the veneer of public space. Despite the aesthetic changes, these places still seem to be what Freie would label counterfeit communities.

Within suburbia, the lines between private and public space are often blurred. Instead of public parks, many neighborhoods now have parks run by a homeowners association (HOA). Much like a shopping center, these parks are not public places. As such, they are subject to rules that may go beyond the restrictions of a public park. Furthermore, they are exclusive places that limit access along various membership requirements. If this happens, it might not be the police who do the asking. Instead, it might be the neighborhood’s private security force.

Meanwhile, in the cities there is a movement toward revitalization. The cities are coming back, or so it would seem. The context and rules have changed and cities must now compete against the many lures of the suburbs. As mentioned above, the suburbs are now even offering anesthetized urban islands. With the ostensible draw of urban life reproduced in the suburbs, the task of urban renewal becomes even more difficult.

In this context, cities have found it necessary to incentivize development. Redeveloping urban space is viewed as risky, so developers ask for something in return. Two common forms of incentives are tax-increment financing (TIF) and tax-abatements. In the former, cities assist developers through the use of tax revenue. The city will issue a bond, which is used to fund a development it deems worthwhile. The bond is paid off through a portion of sales tax revenue collected within the development. In the case of tax abatements, property taxes are waived or reduced for a set period of time. This configuration is not without implications. The city is admitting that part of their city has been terribly neglected and will not be developed without government intervention. Indeed “blight” is typically a necessary condition for these incentives.

Yet another obstacle for cities is obtaining funding through municipal bonds. In this process, cities are at the mercy of bond rating agencies that determine their credit-worthiness. Hackworth (2007) states that “bond-rating agencies now exert more pressure on local governments to be entrepreneurial than ever before” (p. 33). If municipal leaders publicly deride business, it might hurt their bond rating and ability to borrow funds.

Cities may be coming back, but they are also in a precarious position. Their vitality is dependent upon private developers who are not necessarily eager to enter urban markets. Erecting an apartment complex in a cornfield is an easier proposition than converting a blighted warehouse into lofts. Incentives serve as a leveling device for cities. However, the public-private partnership is not without implications. For example, some neighborhoods have established Business Improvement Districts (BID) or the similar, but more civic-sounding, Community Improvement District (CID). Hannigan (1997) explains that BIDs “have legal status to tax themselves in order to provide an expanded repertoire of services. Some of these services – street cleaning, garbage pick-ups, security patrols – mimic and even replace city services which

have steadily fallen victim to government budget cuts” (p. 139). In this way, the urban BID or CID resembles the suburban HOA. By allowing certain areas to establish BIDs, municipalities are also giving those areas an advantage. Furthermore, there could be conflicts between the goals of security patrols and the written law. In the case of BIDs, private security is patrolling public spaces.

Of course, renewed urban developments will need to entice residents from the suburbs. The suburban émigrés may be accustomed to receiving better services and security within their subdivisions. As such, the perquisite services offered by a BID would seem natural. What else might seem natural is economic segregation, which has been a tenet of the suburban trajectory (Jackson, 1985). Before widespread suburbanization the bourgeois lived near their workers. The suburbs have allowed for an insular existence, wherein the down-trodden are kept out-of-sight and out-of-mind. While a mixed-use neighborhood might be attractive, a mixed-income neighborhood might be less palatable. Will such insularity also be expected in renewed urban neighborhoods? In midtown Omaha, an infill development promises “Urban Living Redefined” (Midtown Crossing Omaha, NE, n.d.). The statement points to a central problem of urban revitalization – *urban* has a negative connotation for many people. One way this particular development changes the definition is by offering residents their own private shuttle service to downtown. It is a form of mass transit, but not *public* transit.

To summarize, municipalities have found ways to repopulate their urban cores. But this has required compromise. By considering the evolution of Kansas City’s Crossroads Arts District, the discursive struggle over these compromises can be illuminated. With that in mind, I turn now to a brief history of urban revitalization in Kansas City.

Urban Revitalization in Kansas City

Kansas City, Missouri, was once a city with a certain amount of cache. It produced music legends like Charlie Parker. Once dubbed the “Paris of the Plains,” it was a regional draw. Its Country Club Plaza area was admired throughout the country (Jackson, 1985). After World War II, as a product of the Kansas City political machine inhabited the White House, Kansas City began to lose its luster. Of course, the scenario was not unique to Kansas City. Cities throughout the country gave way to metropolitan areas (Jackson, 1985). The suburbs were driven by the lure of cheap real estate coupled with increased personal mobility (i.e., the automobile and interstate highway system). First residents left the urban core. Later, retail would also relocate to the suburbs. Office buildings would also eventually make the move. In the case of Kansas City, many of these elements moved across the state line to Johnson County, Kansas.

Kansas City attempted to combat this attrition, but initially ceded residential development to the suburbs. Instead, the city pursued large-scale office buildings and retail complexes. Later, the city would attempt to create attractions, as it did when it turned the city’s union station into a tourist site. As the 21st century began, Kansas City also invested millions of dollars in an urban entertainment district. Dubbed the Power & Light District, it has always been managed by the private Cordish Company.

In contrast to the laws regulating public spaces, the Cordish Company has enacted controversial policies, such as its dress code. The Power & Light District, the manifestation of a so-called “public-private partnership,” is a thoroughly neo-liberal project. Tightly-controlled and well-planned, in some ways it is the antithesis of the Crossroads Arts District, although only a stretch of interstate separates the Power & Light District from the Crossroads Arts District.

These two neighborhoods are showcases of Kansas City's urban revival, yet their development trajectories are quite different. The Power & Light District resembles a "Fantasy City" (Hannigan, 1998) or neo-liberal city (Hackworth, 2007). The Crossroads Arts District differs in some key ways. Perhaps the most important difference is that it was not planned by the city. The city was actually surprised by the demand for urban residences, but it quickly seized upon this opportunity by incentivizing private developers.

History of the Crossroads Arts District

Just south of the Power & Light District lies the Crossroads Arts District. As the name implies, this former warehouse district is the focal point of the city's arts community. This distinction was not the result of municipal planning. Though the name Crossroads was originally conceived by the city, the neighborhood was not envisioned as an artists' enclave.

The neighborhood's genesis can be traced back to Jim Leedy, who the city recently declared the "Godfather of the Crossroads." However, the city was not originally very interested in his urban renewal efforts. To be fair, Leedy was originally more interested in helping artists than urban renewal. In 1985, Leedy, a sculptor and professor at the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI), purchased a building in the Crossroads area. He renovated the building to offer recent KCAI graduates affordable apartments, studio space and a gallery. Leedy had previously attempted to establish this sort of space in midtown Kansas City's Westport neighborhood. However, Westport eventually experienced urban gentrification and Leedy's landlord declined to renew his lease. This experience prompted Leedy to purchase the Crossroads building, rather than renting again (Drake, 1987, July 19). The modest rent Leedy charged to artists was used to support a gallery of their work on the ground floor (Cross, 2006, May).

As time went by, more galleries moved into the neighborhood. A notable early addition was the Dolphin Gallery, operated by John O'Brien. By 1999 the area had begun to be called The Crossroads Arts District (Thorson, April 25, 1999; Couch, 1999, July 13). This was also when the district began to sponsor the popular First Friday events when galleries are opened to the public. Attendees were exposed to art, but they were also exposed to the neighborhood itself.

Eventually the neighborhood garnered interest beyond the arts community. New York restaurateur Lidia Bastianich led a group of investors interested in the area's Freighthouse building. This development called for renovating a blighted building to house destination restaurants. Unlike the nearby artists, the Freighthouse development sought government assistance, which fundamentally changed the direction of the community.

Over time other residential and commercial enterprises became interested in the Crossroads neighborhood. To encourage this urban redevelopment, Kansas City offered tax breaks to developers and purchasers of condominiums. The formula seemed to work quite well, as the neighborhood was soon filled with new urban residents and a variety of new restaurants. However, this urban renaissance was not necessarily good news for the artists who founded the district. By 2007, property values in the district had increased drastically, which resulted in higher property taxes (Lester, May 22, 2007). Meanwhile, developers and newcomers were being granted tax abatements. Eventually artists were granted tax relief, but not without having to resort to neoliberal rhetoric.

In the early 21st century, the Crossroads neighborhood was changed from an underdeveloped artists' enclave to a hip urban neighborhood, and it became a successful model of new urban renewal. How this transformation occurred is the focus of this dissertation. The notion of urban living in Kansas City had to be sold. Urban living in Kansas City had to be sold

to both businesses and residents. This was accomplished through rhetorical means working at the intersection of governmental, economic and human concerns.

Method

In this dissertation, rhetorical analysis is used to explain why one instance of urban renewal has been successful. To be certain, this question could be addressed by a variety of disciplines. The disciplines of economics, political science and sociology could likely tell us much about the topic by tracking money, examining laws and exploring demographics. To do so would be useful, but it would miss the central role rhetoric played in connecting all of these related areas. Rhetorical analysis reveals how a variety of texts operate within a context, in this case what I have called the neo-liberal occupational psychosis. It is through rhetoric that cultural norms are challenged and policies are debated.

The motivation of this dissertation is similar to what led Zarefsky (1986) to examine *President Johnson's War on Poverty*. In that study, Zarefsky demonstrated through a rhetorical examination of the discourses surrounding Johnson's fight against poverty that it was doomed to fail because of the early symbolic choices that were made. In a similar vein, the methodological approach of this dissertation follows the sentiments expressed by Martin Medhurst, who has explained that he is primarily "interested in substantive matters, which [he] choose[s] to study through the instrumentality of rhetoric" (2006, 318). This study, that is, focuses upon the symbolic choices that were made in arguing for and promoting urban renewal. Rhetorical analysis provides the necessary tools for putting such a focus into practice.

In hoping for depth over breadth, I have chosen to limit this study to one extended case study – the rhetorical struggle over the creation and maintenance of Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District between its initial conception in 1985 and today. The key players in the debate

include the arts community and its supporters, the city and its citizens, and corporate interests and their developers. I have drawn texts from the following sources: city council meetings, incentive proposals (i.e., TIF applications), municipal reports, news articles and promotional materials from commercial developers. The focus on these diverse texts offers several benefits. The arts community lacks the rhetorical options enjoyed by developers and governments, so it has relied disproportionately on press coverage. Developers and government officials also garner press attention, but have additional resources available. Developers may engage in public relations efforts to promote their projects. Government officials may demand attention from the media by holding press conferences or committee meetings. Hearing from all these voices means discovering texts from each of these areas.

My research has involved combing through a good deal of minutiae. This has meant reading hundreds of news reports, municipal reports, incentive applications, minutes of city council meetings, and (when available) watching video recordings of meetings. Far from trivial, this minutia has proven invaluable since, as Asen (2010) notes, “in policy debates ... mundane statements often are more influential than exceptional rhetorical performances” (p. 133). Using NewsBank and LexisNexis, I have read and analyzed all articles that mention the “Crossroads Arts District,” “Freighthouse District,” “Jim Leedy,” “Dolphin Gallery,” and “Leedy-Voukos Gallery.” The vast majority of these articles are drawn from the *Kansas City Star*. However, the district has also been mentioned in the *New York Times* and other regional newspapers. Additionally, I have searched the archives of *The Pitch*, which is Kansas City’s alternative newspaper. Within *The Pitch*, I have found more explicit support for the artists. Though the *Kansas City Star* is frequently supportive of artists, it does so through economic justifications.

Additionally, I have searched the archives of Kansas City's NPR-affiliate station (KCUR), which regularly reports on the local arts scene.

To assess the city's position, I have examined press reports, municipal reports, incentive applications and city council meetings. In some cases only minutes of the meetings were available, but video archives of recent meetings were available for viewing. Municipal reports can be divided into two categories. One category is focused on how the city can be improved. Examples of this include the FOCUS report and Old Film Row Design guidelines. These reports have a symbiotic relationship with tax incentive packages, which are also examined. Another type of report is primarily focused on what has been accomplished. This is represented by the Redevelopment Report. In addition to these reports, a large part of the city's rhetoric can be found in incentive packages. These packages come in two varieties. First, there are tax-abatements. If she meets certain conditions, a condominium developer might be able to sell units with a reduced property tax liability. This might include a limited-term tax abatement or tax reduction. Another form of incentives is tax-increment-financing or simply TIF through which the city invests in private projects to help them get off the ground. The investment is paid off through future tax revenue generated within a designated TIF district. In both instances, the tax incentive packages can be found on the Internet.

Finally, I also considered the rhetoric of property developers as they worked to build new homes, retail spaces and offices as well as attract people to these new developments. Property developers address two audiences. Through incentive applications, they address the city. In these applications they have two goals: 1) the area would not be developed without incentives; 2) they will adhere to the goals of the city. After receiving incentives, developers then must target potential buyers. Since most Kansas Citians live in suburban environments, developers are

asking them to contemplate a different way of life. To examine this, I have looked at promotional Web sites, press releases and paid articles published in the *Kansas City Star*.

My analysis of the texts started from a neo-Aristotelian position, with a focus on the rhetors, audiences, themes, and types of persuasion involved. This starting point allowed me to identify the rhetoricity of seemingly mundane documents, even applications for tax-increment-financing (TIF). As Aune (2001) reminds us, economic rhetoric often denies its own rhetoricity, instead presenting itself as simply the cold, hard truth. To understand neoliberal rhetoric and its effects on society, it must be treated as inherently rhetorical. To see the rhetorical aspects of economic development, one need only crack open the Neo-Aristotelian's toolbox.

After my textual analysis, I took a constitutive approach to the texts. I sought to move beyond simple instrumentality, instead seeking to uncover the intersection of rhetoric, culture and policy. The constitutive approach requires a critic to determine what type of audience is created by the text, rather than handling audience and text as discrete entities. Jasinski and Mercieca (2010) offer a detailed account of the constitutive turn in rhetorical criticism. The authors trace the constitutive turn back to Maurice Charland and James Boyd White. Though these two critics worked independently, they shared "basic social constructionist assumptions about the contingency of human beliefs and institutions and the generative potential of discursive action" (p. 314). This was a step beyond Bitzer, who "insisted in 1968, [public discourse] functioned instrumentally, enabling individuals and groups to respond to preexisting situations" (p. 313). This is insufficient, because rhetoric may also create conditions. Specifically, rhetoric may likely envision an ideal audience, which is the crux of constitutive rhetoric.

Preview of Dissertation

By employing Neoristotelian and constitutive rhetorical methods upon the mundane, I argue that one dominant theme emerges in the rhetoric of urban renewal that coalesced around the Crossroads Arts District. By researching the mundane, I have found a theme within the rhetoric. The rhetoric is infused with neo-liberal values throughout. All other considerations are eventually subsumed to business interests. There is a consistent sense that the city must accommodate developers today, so it may reap benefits tomorrow. The neo-liberal values are so pervasive, that even artists (the district's founders) capitulate. To make this argument, I focus upon three contexts that guided much of this rhetoric.

In Chapter Two I consider the identity of the neighborhood. The Crossroads Arts District began as an artists' enclave. Over time it evolved into a trendy, urban neighborhood. Its population shifted from artists to professionals. Yet it maintained its identity as an "arts district." To explain this evolution, I draw upon Maurice Charland's concept of constitutive rhetoric. Inhabitants of the Crossroads were interpellated as bohemian, rather than as producers and consumers. This coincided with a national and local embrace of the "creative class," a term coined by Richard Florida. Florida argues that the future of cities depends on a sort of professional bohemian. As such, cities should offer the urban amenities that attract members of the class. This embrace of the creative class can be explained by Thomas Frank's notion of "hip consumerism" and Richard Liu's description of hip producer culture. In the new urban rhetoric of the Crossroads, consumers and producers are invited to dissociate from their actual activities and view themselves as part of a bohemian class.

In Chapter Three I consider the infrastructure of the neighborhood. The Crossroads Arts District began as a warehouse district. Eventually artists were attracted to the affordable spaces

to live and work. At this point, the district was what de Certeau calls a “space.” It was a spontaneous, undisciplined environment. As it became a trendy urban neighborhood, infrastructure became a primary concern. To be successful, the neighborhood had to become what de Certeau calls a “place,” a more predictable environment meant to reduce uncertainty. This project was pursued by improving infrastructure, encouraging mixed-use development, creating safety measures and establishing common spaces. Eschewing the uncertainty and playfulness of spaces, the new urban rhetoric of the Crossroads encouraged the active construction of places, insisting that even community should be driven by neoliberal assumptions to avoid waste and increase use value.

In Chapter Four, I consider how public funds have been allocated to fund economic development. The city has used incentives to encourage economic development within the neighborhood. To explain this phenomenon, I draw upon Aune’s (2001) “rhetoric of economic correctness.” In the Crossroads Arts District, artists have been used to market the neighborhood. However, tax breaks were not initially granted to the artists. This sparked a controversy and presents some important questions. Should cities ‘invest’ in private projects, with an eye toward future tax revenues? The incentive packages employed by the city are based on this sort of bet. If the city does help fund residential developments, should the properties be sold at market rates? The counter-argument is that tax abatements should not be granted only to those who can afford expensive condominiums. Ultimately, the city would grant tax breaks to artists. However, they did so based on economic justifications rather than the intrinsic value of art.

In the conclusion I discuss the larger implications. Kansas City is not unique in this pattern of urban renewal and economic development. Within Oklahoma City, a forgotten African-American neighborhood is now home to upscale lofts. The neighborhood was formerly

known for its jazz musicians. Today the neighborhood's history is used as a marketing tool rather than a celebration of its heritage. I consider the implications of this type of co-optation. For advocates of urban renewal, neighborhoods like the Crossroads Arts District may seem like a success story. However, the sacrifices and compromises made along the way cannot be ignored.

Chapter Two: Constituting Identity

Introduction

For any neighborhood to be successful, it needs to attract people. Anyone who doubts this should examine the ghost cities of China. There, a regional government constructed the luxurious city of Kangbashi, which features everything except people. So far, they have not been able to attract many residents to this new town, despite offering a slew of cultural amenities (Barboza, 2010, October 20). The U.S. is not immune to this, as some of its new exurbs have failed to meet expectations. In far-flung exurbs of Chicago, recent economic crises have brought the real estate boom to a screeching halt (Johnson, 2011, August 21). Before the economy declined, these neighborhoods successfully employed the premises of suburbia. That is, residents were willing to endure a long commute in order to own a single-family home away from the city. A 2004 article in *USA Today* refers to this phenomenon as “driving until you qualify” for a mortgage (Howlett & Overberg, 2004, November 30). This level of sacrifice demonstrates the enduring lure of suburbia in the twenty-first century. Yet, at the same time urban neighborhoods were beginning to greet new residents.

Urban neighborhoods, such as the Crossroads Arts District, could not market themselves in the same manner as suburban neighborhoods. Suburban real estate was easy to market because the rhetorical heavy lifting had been done over a century earlier. That was when Catharine Beecher, Andrew Jackson Downing and others helped build the desire for suburban living. These early suburban proselytizers also established the notion that commuting was a reasonable sacrifice (Jackson, 1985). To market urban neighborhoods in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was a much harder task. The customer base for this product simply did not exist, so its promoters needed to rhetorically construct the audience.

Since the U.S. is a suburban nation, the rhetoric of urban renewal must ask its audience to adjust their ontological security. The audience is asked to change their notions of everyday life, as an urban environment presents different notions of privacy, autonomy and community. This is not to suggest that urban renewal has eschewed rational argument. Urban renewal developments have, for instance, certainly employed the premise of convenience. This is evident when they promote the minimal maintenance endured by a condominium owner, shorter commutes and easy access to restaurants and shops. Yet convenience by itself is not sufficient. If it were, then American suburbia would have never seemed such an attractive option. Instead, early suburban promoters appealed to notions of family and leisure. Jackson (1985) notes that the “new suburbs were the precise opposite of the kind of dense human settlement that had characterized the planet for millennia” (p. 71). Hence, early suburban rhetoric also required the audience to adjust its ontological security.

Throughout the history of Western culture, there has typically been less demarcation between the realms of work and home than is currently taken for granted. In rural areas, one often lived on the land that one farmed. In the city, shopkeepers lived close to their shops, often in the same building. By necessity, workers typically lived within walking distance of their workplaces (Fishman, 1987; Jackson, 1985). The commuting lifestyle, however, established clear divisions between the male-dominated work sphere and the female-occupied domestic sphere (Jackson, 1985), with the latter sphere becoming the ideal domain of the family. To some extent, the appeals to family have been buttressed upon xenophobic and racist fear appeals. While cities were first associated with recent European immigrants who were thought to be dangerous (Jackson, 1985), suburban development was intensified when cities became a “racialized space” associated with African-Americans (Gotham, 2002).

Hence, the suburban norm was not the result of rational deliberation. Rather, the suburban trajectory depended upon emotional appeals to the audience's fears and aspirations. In Burke's terms, moving away from the city began to mean moving toward perfection – an idealized world of family, leisure and safety. To attract people, renewed urban areas have needed to redefine perfection. This has involved creating a new attractive urban identity. However, this does not mean constructing a new identity from scratch. Early suburbia was about making the country estate widely accessible. Fishman (1987) notes that early English bourgeois commuters viewed country homes as a symbol of the aristocracy. Urban renewal also depends upon the symbolism of real estate, but it has depended on a different set of symbols.

Urban renewal has had to construct identities out of an idealized version of the bohemian artist. The loft apartment has served as an icon of renewed urban neighborhoods throughout the U.S., including the Crossroads Arts District. The loft symbolizes the bohemian lifestyle of an urban artist. Whereas early suburbanites identified with the affluent, the new urban denizens identify with a class that often lacks resources. As such, a process of co-optation has unfolded in which aspirants displace their identification target. This has been particularly true in the Crossroads Arts District where a new set of middle-class consumers and producers have gradually displaced the artists responsible for the neighborhood's ethos. The new class of urban residents embodies what urban theorist Richard Florida has called the "Creative Class," which includes knowledge workers who have adopted the symbol system of urban bohemians.

Like many other places, what unfolded in the Crossroads Arts District is best described in terms of constitutive rhetoric. This concept originated with Charland (1987), who drew from Black, Burke, McGee and Althusser. Constitutive rhetoric focuses on how texts create ideal audiences, rather than merely addressing the empirical audience. Audiences are enticed to

inhabit an idealized identity, in the process adopting a new constellation of ontological commitments. The Crossroads Arts District's success depended upon constitutive rhetoric, because there was no existing audience for the product. Through constitutive rhetoric, the city and developers constituted a hip urban audience.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explain the role constitutive rhetoric played in attracting people to the Crossroads Arts District. First, I will provide an overview of constitutive rhetoric. Second, I will discuss how the identity of the neighborhood evolved. Third, I will discuss how the Crossroads interpellated consumers, with a focus on residents. Fourth, I will discuss how producers (i.e., workers) were interpellated within the neighborhood's ethos. Finally, I will offer conclusions and implications. The neighborhood's constitutive rhetoric has depended upon the co-optation of the existing arts community. As such, its success highlights the tenuous relationship between the fine arts and commercial endeavors.

Constitutive Rhetoric

Constitutive rhetoric is based on identity and identification, rather than rational argument. In this way, it adheres closely to Burke's conception of rhetoric. More specifically, constitutive rhetoric is about Burke's (1969) notion of consubstantiality, demonstrating the tension between the desire for autonomy and the desire for belonging. People seek out what Burke (1937) calls the "corporate we" with which to identify. In *Attitudes Toward History*, Burke states that,

To be sure, there *is* the individual. Each man [sic] is a unique combination of experiences, a unique set of situations, a unique aggregate of mutually re-enforcing and conflicting "corporate we's." But he must build his symbolic bridges between his own unique combination and the social pattern with relation to the social pattern, instead of treating his uniqueness as the realm of an uncrowned king. (p. 239).

A similar perspective on identification is found in the more recent work of political philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. As Appiah states, “[a]round the world, it matters to people that they can tell a story of their lives that meshes with larger narratives” (p. 68). Rather than crafting a unique story, Appiah believes people consume and use available identities. He specifically defines identification as, “the process through which individuals shape their projects – including their plans for their own life and their conceptions of the good life – by reference to available labels, available identities” (p. 66). In other words, individuals situate themselves within pre-existing narratives that are circulated throughout society. Constitutive rhetoric recognizes that humans seek communion by participating in available narratives. Like Burke and Appiah, Charland understands that all identities, or subject positions, are part of larger rhetorics. Furthermore, Charland (1987) is concerned with three ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric: (1) the constitution of a people; (2) the creation of a transhistorical subject; and (3) the illusion of freedom.

Charland’s (1987) first ideological effect, the constitution of a people, reflects what Jasinski and Mercieca (2010) have called “basic social constructionist assumptions about the contingency of human beliefs and institutions and the generative potential of discursive action” (p. 314). That is, understandings of reality, including collective identities, are generated through rhetoric. The notion of an implicit audience generated through discourse can be traced back to Black (1970). By proposing the “second persona,” Black urged critics to look beyond the empirical audience and instead consider the ideologically constructed audience embodied by the text. By ideology, Black (1970) referred to the way “Marx used the term: the network of interconnected convictions that functions in a man epistemically and that shapes his identity by determining how he views the world” (p. 112). While Black’s second persona pointed

researchers in the right direction, Charland did not think Black sufficiently considered the ontology of the audience and of the constituted persona.

Charland believes the constitution of a people occurs through a process of interpellation, a term he borrows from Althusser (1970). To be interpellated is to recognize what Althusser calls a *hail*. The hailed individual realizes that she is being called upon. Althusser suggests that when a police officer yells “hey you,” the intended target recognizes the hail. That is, the person recognizes her/himself as part of the criminal element. In the case of constitutive rhetoric, narratives about collective identities are deployed as hails. Ideological discourse and subjects do not exist apart from one another. When Charland (1987) first considered constitutive rhetoric, he was concerned with the Quebecois movement in Canada. In this context, the rhetors drew upon an available identity, that of the historic French-Canadian settler. However, this identity was a symbolic target, or enticement. The rhetoric of the People Quebecois was about Canadian Francophones gaining autonomy in the 20th century, rather than living a frontier lifestyle. The iconic Francophone was an enticement to a much larger set of commitments. The symbol was used to create, or constitute, an audience that would adhere to the tenets of the movement.

Similarly, Beasley (2004) utilized constitutive rhetoric to analyze how U.S. presidents interpellated the American people. She was not concerned with “overt appeals in which chief executives have told their listeners what to think or which policy to support” (p. 9). Instead, Beasley was concerned with “ways that presidential discourse subtly reinforces the audience’s presumed collective identity as national subjects” (p. 9). Constitutive rhetoric is, in effect, about the packaging of a people around a desirable identity. Other critics have also used constitutive rhetoric to explain the rhetorical construction of national and ethnic identities. Drzwiecka (2002) considered how the Polish diaspora constituted its identity. Morus (2007) was concerned with

how identities were constituted in the post-Yugoslav context. And Jasinski (1992) examined how American federalists and anti-federalists constituted two different notions of American society during the debate over constitutional ratification. Stein (2002) used constitutive rhetoric to consider how commercial advertisements constituted a collective identity, a purpose similar to mine. While examining Macintosh's "1984" commercial, Stein (2002) notes that "[a]dvertising discourse constitutes viewers as deficient in some quality, attribute, or value such as happiness or liberty, a deficiency constructed as happily remedied through the consumption of material objects" (p. 174). Hence, constitutive rhetoric can be employed for political and capitalistic projects.

The second ideological effect, the creation of a transhistorical subject, is also closely linked to Burke's concept of consubstantiality. Charland (1987) notes how People Quebecois rhetoric sought to link all French-speaking Canadians to a transhistorical Francophone, dating back to the New French settlers who struggled under British oppression. To accomplish this, the audience would need to look past their differences and be convinced of their historical commonality. When Burke explained consubstantiality in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he highlighted its tenuous nature. There he admonished that, an individual "may *identify himself* with [someone else] even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so" (p. 20). As McGee (1975) would later say, the people are "a mass illusion" and "[i]n purely objective terms, the only human reality is that of the individual; groups ... are infused with an artificial identity" (p. 242). As Drzwiecka notes, constitutive rhetoric seeks to obscure differences inherent within the audience. The audience is invited to rally around the new identity, whether it be nationalistic (Beasley, 2002; Charland, 1987; Drzwiecka, 2002; Jaskinski,

1992) or materialistic (Stein, 2002). But even the new identities must be tied to a transhistorical understanding of the subject if they are to succeed (Charland, 1987).

As Charland notes in the third ideological effect, constitutive rhetoric appears to offer a range of possibilities, but its narrative form actually precludes this. This is because stories have a telos, whether it be supporting a sovereign Quebec (Charland, 1987) or buying a computer (Stein, 2002). To achieve consubstantiality, one must enter the narrative. Charland (1987) explains that once an individual enters a story she wants to achieve the sort of narrative probability described by Fisher (1985). This is to say that interpellated individuals must conform to the norms of a story in order to identify with it. Or, as Morus (2007) states, “[a]s individuals come to identify with the narratives these myths are embodied by, they begin willingly to emphasize those characteristics that the narratives value” (p. 144).

Stein (2002) built upon this third ideological effect to explain how hegemony is maintained within consumer culture. She specifically examined how Macintosh users were interpellated as rebels within the company’s “1984” commercial, while competitor IBM was presented as “Stalinist.” Those who were dissatisfied with mainstream consumer culture were offered an apparent escape, but the answer was merely to purchase another consumer product. It is the classic problem-solution rhetoric, but the solution closely resembles the problem. This co-optation of the outsider is at the heart of this chapter. Identifying with a countercultural element may seem empowering, but empowering audiences is not the goal of constitutive rhetoric. As Drzwiecka (2002) observes, constitutive rhetoric is about socialization. That is, “it invites audiences to accept preexisting sets of relations and subject positions” (pp. 11-12).

In the case of the creative class, this means the illusion of outsider status. This is reflected in Frank’s (1997) notion of “hip consumerism” and Liu’s (2004) statement, “we work here, but

we're cool.” In both cases, the interpellated subjects have not changed the ends of their productivity. In the case of producers, this can be further described as a method of controlling employees (Tompkins and Cheney, 1985). When employees are highly identified with the culture of their organizations, it is easier to motivate them toward the organization's goals. Perhaps no one understands this better than Richard Florida, who links the “creative class” to economic prosperity. This is best demonstrated by the “Bohemian Index” he uses to rank cities. Florida has been influential in urban renewal nationally and within Kansas City. Florida's rhetoric of the “creative class” has provided, in fact, cities with strategies for repopulating their urban cores.

Interpellation in the Crossroads was facilitated by the artists who had previously established the neighborhood. In this context, the identity of artists was tangible. This stands in distinction to the cases discussed above, where the constituted identity was hypothetical (Jasinski, 1992), abstract (Stein, 2002) or historically removed (Charland, 1987). In the case of the Crossroads, the identity target (i.e., artists) was easily observable. I turn now to a consideration of how that identity came to define the neighborhood and how it was eventually co-opted to attract a new class of consumers and producers.

An Identity Crisis

The Crossroads Arts District was founded for simple reasons. Jim Leedy, a sculptor and instructor at the Kansas City Art Institute, sought to fill an artistic void in Kansas City. Leedy taught at the Kansas City Art Institute where his students had access to expensive equipment. After graduation, their access to such equipment was limited. In 1985 Leedy purchased buildings in a warehouse district directly south of Kansas City's central business district (Martin, 2007). He renovated the buildings to include work and living spaces for artists (Drake, 1987,

July 19). The artists were offered affordable apartments, and the rent from these apartments was used to operate a gallery of their work on the ground floor (Cross, 2006, May). Hence, Leedy established a transitional space for recent art school graduates, providing them an opportunity to commune, rather than pursuing atomistic existences. Furthermore, Leedy sought to keep recent art school graduates in the Kansas City area. Before the district was formed, Leedy believed that KCAI graduates had no reason to stay in Kansas City (Lapp, 2002, December 29).

Eventually, Leedy encouraged other artists to open galleries in the area, establishing a nascent arts district. In 1992, The Dolphin Gallery was among the first galleries to relocate to nearby buildings (Thorson, 1992, December 27). Reflecting upon his move, Dolphin Gallery owner John O'Brien said, "Jim told me about this dream of his for this neighborhood and we've been working on that dream ever since" (Paul, 2007, December 8). Hence, a community of artists coalesced to the warehouse district. This evolution was described concisely in a 2010 *New York Times* profile of Kansas City: "Industrial stagnation and suburban exodus in the 1960s left the Crossroads neighborhood nearly deserted. But thanks to the recent efforts of arts advocates and city tax breaks, the Crossroads Arts District ... is now home to some 70 galleries" (Wilder, 2010, May 12).

Providing opportunities for young artists was only one of Leedy's goals. He was also concerned with showcasing cutting-edge art. He did not believe Kansas City's two established galleries – The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art – fulfilled this purpose. He opined that, "The Kemper and the Nelson don't really deal with what is happening now. It has always been my concern to give opportunity to performance art, installation, things on the edge that are happening now" (Thorson, 2001, December 16). So

Leedy wanted to encourage the creation of a space in which young, contemporary artists, could live and which their “cutting edge” work might be viewed.

The city would eventually proclaim Leedy the “Godfather of the Crossroads” (Resolution NO. 110122, n.d.), but it initially did not recognize his artists’ enclave. At least it did not recognize the economic value of artists. The neighborhood was first on the city’s economic development radar when New York chef Lidia Bastianich sought to open a restaurant in 1998. She and her partners hoped to renovate a building dubbed the Freight House, which sat on the edge of the Crossroads. Unlike Leedy’s and O’Brien’s galleries, this endeavor requested tax-increment financing. Notably, the initial request did not even recognize the nearby artists’ enclave (22nd and Main TIF, 1998). However, this was corrected when the request was amended in 1999. This amendment refers to both the Freighthouse District and the Crossroads Arts District. (1st Amendment). This confusion was reflected in popular press reports on the district during the same time period. A reporter for the *Kansas City Star* acknowledges the conflicting names: “Speaking of the Freight House district - or Crossroads Arts District, as the area is also known - the TIF Commission last week approved the hiring of J.E. Dunn Construction Co. as the contractor for a parking garage study” (Couch, 1999, December 14). In a 2000 column, the *Kansas City Star*’s Sunday Opinion Editor first refers to the neighborhood as the Freight House District, but also acknowledges the alternate name: “It takes more than a casual visit to this area, which some call the Crossroads Arts District, to appreciate the spontaneous, broad-based revival that’s occurring” (McClanahan, 2000, January 18). So uncertain was the area’s identity that the owner of the Dolphin Gallery suggested simply calling the area “Leedytown,” to honor Leedy’s long presence in the neighborhood (Couch, 1999, July 13).

The name Crossroads actually predated the art galleries. It came from a 1977 effort to instill identity in the neighborhood (Thomas, 1995, November 2). Decades later, newcomers had embraced the label, but found competition from the Freight House moniker. In the face of this identity crisis, Leedy insisted that it be called the Crossroads Arts District. He opined that, “[f]irst of all, it's not the Freight House District. That's something to advertise for Lidia's and that's fine. This is the Crossroads Arts District. It's been called Crossroads forever. It's imperative that it be called the Arts District because that is what the area has been and should continue to be” (Couch, 1999, July 13). In suggesting that the area had been known as the Crossroads “forever,” Leedy sought to offer a historical narrative.

The constitution of the neighborhood was in crisis. Would it be an artists' enclave or an economic opportunity for the city? Through a process of co-optation, it became both. The embrace of the art district was exemplified by the Freight House developers, who in 1998 pledged to spend \$50,000 on public art projects (Thorson, 1998, August 2b) such as an outdoor light installation by Crossroads artist James Woodfill (Thorson, 1998, August 2a). Though proponents of the Crossroads name won, this victory had unforeseen consequences. Rather than a celebration of their community, the Crossroads became a brand name. The brand name would set off a constitutive crisis in the neighborhood, as business interests co-opted the bohemian ethos.

Co-optation of hip, counter-cultural trends is standard practice within a neo-liberal economy. Frank (1997) offers an extensive examination of what he terms “hip consumerism,” which he believes is a practice that allows subjects to dissociate their professional and non-professional identities. He explains that, “[h]owever we may rankle under the bureaucratized monotony of our productive lives, in our consuming lives we are no longer merely affluent, we

are *rebels*. Efficiency may remain the values of daytime, but by night we rejoin the nonstop carnival of our consuming lives” (p. 232). Frank recognizes the tension between one’s real self and ideal self. What he calls “hip consumerism” is a way to commodify fringe elements of society. For example, it allows a tattooed graphic designer to *look* subversive while actually being servile to corporate interests.

The repopulation of the Crossroads was also aided by the fact that “creativity” was a privileged term in the early 21st Century. This stemmed largely from Richard Florida’s promotion of the “creative class,” which has been immensely influential in the urban renewal movement. Florida has adopted a broad conception of the “creative class,” which includes a variety of “knowledge workers.” He also laid the groundwork for the commodification of bohemian ethos. Florida believes the “creative class” is instrumental in the revitalization of cities. As such, his ideas deserve consideration here.

From Artists to Creative Class

Richard Florida is an urban theorist who has been in demand throughout the early twenty-first century. As cities, including Kansas City, struggled to re-invent themselves, Florida offered some possible solutions. One seemingly radical recommendation involved embracing the apparent outsiders, by actively attracting bohemian elements. In *Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida describes how he encountered many applicants at a Pittsburgh job fair who displayed a counterculture appearance (e.g., tattoos, piercings, casual clothing). He was struck by two aspects of this experience: 1) technology companies were interested in these applicants; and 2) the applicants were not interested in staying in Pittsburgh. Florida was upset that these bohemians were taking their Pittsburgh education and moving to the much hipper city of Austin.

This experience seemed to open Florida's eyes to the role of apparent counter-culture in contemporary cities. I use the term "apparent," because these outsiders were seeking employment at private companies. They were not on a mission to change the world. Rather, they just did not wish to change their appearance. Florida uses this story as a representative anecdote of why cities need to be concerned with attracting young, hip knowledge workers. He calls this group of bohemian professionals the "creative class." Furthermore, he has argued that cities should attract the creative class in order to revitalize their urban cores.

Florida's ideas on urban renewal have attracted criticism from many quarters. In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2002) takes on both conservative and liberal critics of the bohemian ethic. He believes the conservatives, such as Daniel Bell and David Brooks, have failed to see the merits of the bohemian ethic. However, Florida is more critical of liberals like Thomas Frank. In an interesting oversight, Florida mistakenly refers to Frank's book as "*The Commodification of Cool*." Indeed, the actual book, *The Conquest of Cool*, is about how cool has been co-opted and commodified. Frank (1997) argues that art has been depoliticized and commercialized. Florida, conversely, has no time for such criticism. In his counter-argument to Frank, it is worth quoting Florida at length:

Few cultural products have much political content to begin with. Many cultural theorists like to see cultural forms such as graffiti art and rap as political movements expressing the voices of the oppressed. This absurd notion does a disservice to both politics and art. True political movements, from the civil rights movement to the grassroots organizing of the right wing, are serious entities, laboriously put together and directed to specific political ends. These movements sometimes adopt art forms but are not generated by them. (p. 201)

Of course, this is a rather strict definition of political activity. To be political, one must be “serious” and work toward a specific goal. Under Florida’s conception, political art needs to be commissioned by a political organization and focused on specific legislation. So then, what does he believe artists actually do?

Meanwhile, most good graffiti artists and rappers are like good artists of any kind. They mainly want to hone their skills and do their art. They spend a lot of time practicing, as you may know if you live near any. If they can make money in the process, that’s wonderful. (p. 201)

In this conception, artists are barely more than technicians. At best, a graffiti artist is akin to a concert pianist, who must practice relentlessly. In addition to being depoliticized, their work is also without rhetorical import. Rather, the end products are merely a demonstration of their talents. It is surprising that someone who places a premium on creativity offers such a reductionist understanding of the creative process. Instead of disproving Frank’s (1997) criticism, Florida does much to confirm it by promoting the commodification of counter-culture. This is evident in his “bohemian index,” which gauges how hospitable a city is to the creative class. When speculating on a city’s future, Florida measures its technology, talent and tolerance. The bohemian index is a measure of tolerance, along with his similar “gay index.” Florida’s contention that tolerant cities will be more successful has rankled social conservatives. However, such a notion fits quite well within an atomistic neoliberal system.

If Florida were not influential, then none of this would matter. However, he has been quite influential nationally and within Kansas City. In addition to the *Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida has also published *Cities and the Creative Class* and *The Flight of the Creative Class*. To be certain, Florida is an ally to the urban renewal movement, and this has lead to criticisms of

the two together. In fact, he has earned criticism from urban renewal critic Joel Kotkin. In 2008, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* asked Florida and urban renewal critic Joel Kotkin, “[h]ow would you improve quality of life [in Pittsburgh]?” Kotkin replied that, “I really don’t think it’s a shortage of coffee houses and jazz clubs that is the critical issue.” This was in stark contrast to Florida, who replied that, “I think Pittsburgh really needs to really, really invest in its street-level culture” (Steigerwald, 2008, February 2). With the “creative class,” Florida has crafted a term that is both pro-urban and pro-economic development. Rather than charity projects, cities are positioned as a cultural amenity that will draw desirable employees to the area.

The phrase “creative class” has also become part of the urban renewal discussion within Kansas City. In 2002, Florida delivered the keynote speech at the Kansas City Area Development Council’s annual luncheon (Collison, 2002, November 12). At that time, he spoke about his theory that desirable young employees tend to first move to a city, then find a job (KC listens to ‘creative class, 2008, April 22). This was in contrast to conventional wisdom, which privileged tax breaks for employers. In light of Florida’s research, it would make more sense to incentivize desirable neighborhoods. Instead of seeking employers, cities would benefit from building habitats for talented young professionals. In 2003, Florida cited the Crossroads as one reason Kansas City was attracting people from other parts of the U.S. (Spivak, 2003, November 30). Local and regional leaders also began to see art as an investment that would pay economic dividends. One such proponent was Missouri’s former governor, Republican Matt Blunt. When Blunt offered an economic justification for the arts funding, it closely matched Florida’s rhetoric. Blunt specifically stated that, “[m]any of those knowledge-based workers want cultural amenities. They want to see strong support of the arts. ... Our state (government) does have a role to support the arts, and in doing so I believe it repays itself many times over” (Trussell,

2007, February 25). Support for the arts was seen as an investment, which would pay long-term dividends. Artists would serve as a scenic element. One did not need to be a cutting-edge artist to inhabit the neighborhood. Instead, they could be interpellated as members of the amorphous “creative class.” When the Cerner Corporation was accused of outsourcing, its vice chairman retorted that “we ... are bringing professor Richard Florida’s ‘creative class’ to Missouri, helping to relocate almost 1,200 knowledge workers to Kansas City from across the country since 2001” (Illig, 2004, October 5). It is notable that an influential business leader would invoke Florida. By doing so, Illig drew upon an enthymeme. He does not bother to state the major premise (i.e., that knowledge workers are good for the economy) because he assumes it is widely accepted.

Crossroads property owner Tom Levitt evoked the term “creative class” while arguing for mandatory public art within Kansas City’s zoning code. He argued that public art would “help to attract and maintain the ‘creative class,’ which is so important to our community’s diversity and growth” (Levitt, 2005, February 2003). As evidence, he cites that “[t]he many voluntary installations of outdoor art in the Crossroads Arts District have contributed greatly to our neighborhood’s distinctive culture and sense of place” (ibid.).

This conception of the creative class would be the impetus for the neighborhood’s prosperity in the early twenty-first century. The simultaneous veneration and commodification of creativity would drive residents and employers to the district. This was ostensibly a success for the city, which had struggled to attract people to its downtown. To understand how this occurred, we must return to Charland’s constitutive rhetoric. As the neighborhood evolved, subjects were interpellated. The interpellation can be viewed from two different perspectives. On the one hand, consumers were interpellated. As Frank (1997) described, the Crossroads allowed them to dissociate from the realities of their daytime lives. On the other hand, producers

were interpellated as an increasing amount of creative service firms located within the Crossroads. Drawing upon Alan Liu, I will consider the “alternate workstyle” exhibited by these producers.

Interpellating Consumers

The Crossroads Arts District gained exposure through its First Fridays events. On the first Friday of each month, participating galleries opened their doors to the general public. After spending tiring days in office jobs, First Fridays allowed the public to engage in the sort of “Hip Consumerism” Frank outlined. In 1999, the *Kansas City Star*’s Arts and Entertainment reporter wrote about the “First Fridays” events where Crossroads galleries were open to the public. The article depicts the area as either a destination or a curiosity. One 27-year-old male visitor was quoted as saying, “[t]his is what we do. It's where the hip kids go. It's new and it's fresh and it's as close to New York as we're going to get.” (McTavish, 1999, October 8). A 2005 news article remarked that,

[i]t’s Friday after work and people are coming into central Kansas City instead of fleeing it. The first Friday of each month, thousands drive in from miles around to congregate in the once-nondescript area between Crown Center and downtown. The scene is alive with music, street theater, restaurants, open-door art galleries and all kinds of people (Campbell & Spivak, 2005, May 29).

While these events attracted crowds, this did not automatically translate to success for gallery owners. Gallery owner Sherry Leedy said First Fridays had not necessarily helped the arts community at all. She bluntly stated, “people on the outside think that (a crowd) is financial success. That's not a financial success, that’s a lot of people getting together because there’s literally no place in Kansas City where people can go out and have a social experience”

(Thorson, 2004, November 29). Whether anyone purchased art, the environment allowed visitors to dissociate from their professional personae. Through hip consumerism, they were able to briefly inhabit a different identity.

The popularity of First Fridays, coupled with the neighborhood's official recognition, provided an opportunity for identity formation. In the 1990s, developers began to see opportunities within the district. In 1995, a real estate developer said of the Crossroads: "This area is coming back.... This truly is the lifeblood, from a commerce standpoint, of our city. It's a tremendous area." The developer was not disinterested, as he had recently purchased a seven-story building, with plans for a loft-conversion project (Thomas, 1995, November 2). In 1998, Crossroads fixture John O'Brien (Dolphin Gallery owner) had also noticed more interest in the neighborhood. He explained that, "[f]rom when I moved up here, it's a completely different neighborhood.... A lot of people are looking down here. There's always guys in suits walking around here taking pictures" (Thorson, 1998, August 2b). A "glass artist" who purchased a building in 1997, was relieved that "I got in before the property values went up" (Thorson, 1998, August 2a). Even as Crossroads artists were threatened by the new creative class, the identity of "artist" was also being used to attract the creative class.

Rather than offering mere apartments, the creative class was offered "lofts." Among the most blatant co-optations of the artists' identity is the "SoHo South" loft complex located in the heart of the Crossroads Arts District (Couch, 2000, November 11). The New York arts neighborhood is co-opted here to represent the archetypal urban bohemia. The apartments and condominiums in the neighborhood were called "lofts," which invites romantic images of an archetypal artist. On the surface, renters and buyers were interpellated as bohemians. However, these lofts were all "up to code." In fact, they offered many of the amenities found in the

modern suburban dwelling, such as stainless steel appliances, fitness centers, swimming pools and balconies. One could inhabit a “Midwest SoHo,” as the *New York Times* called it (Glassberg, 2005, November 29), without the inconveniences a struggling artist might endure. The developers would sometimes mention the presence of “exposed pipes,” as if the buildings were somehow dangerous. Obviously, these were a deliberate design choice. Unlike the archetypal artist, these creative class consumers were not squatting.

The features of the individual lofts include many luxury items, such as “granite countertops, modern cabinets, oversized stainless steel farmers sink,” and high ceilings. There are also amenities within the loft community, such as a “roof top work out room with views to downtown.” Most notably, the neighborhood itself is presented as an amenity. In addition to a long list of specific restaurants, the development also boasts proximity to “more art galleries than you can count” (Blue Urban – Piper Lofts Features, n.d.). One loft building bragged that “First Fridays are in your front, side and back yard!” (Blue Urban – Piper Lofts Development, n.d.).

As residential options increased in the Crossroads, the nature of its residents changed. From 2002 to 2004, the neighborhood’s median age shifted from 24 to 33. The median income shifted from \$33,000 to \$79,000 (Glassberg, 2005, November 29). The sales manager for a loft building in the Crossroads described the free lifestyle enjoyed by residents. As he was quoted as saying, “[t]here are lots of professional couples, lots of young single people, lots of empty nesters. They’re looking for a downtown lifestyle. Or an on-the-go lifestyle. They want to be able to shut up the house and take off when they want to” (Hoedel, 2004, October 10).

These demographic changes were accompanied by an expanded array of restaurants and shops. For the most part, these were edgy independent endeavors. One notable exception was the luxury electronics retailer Bang & Olufsen, which relocated from the upscale Country Club

Plaza neighborhood (Smith, 2009, November 10; Bang & Olufsen). Many of the independent restaurants garnered attention in national outlets. For example, a recent *New York Times* profile of Kansas City featured the shops, galleries and dining of the Crossroads (36 hours in Kansas City, 2010, May 12).

It is evident that the neighborhood enjoyed much exposure and financial success. Many people were interpellated by the urban, bohemian environment. To be clear, living in the Crossroads, or any urban neighborhood, is much different than inhabiting the suburbs. Cultural amenities are within footsteps of one's residence. In a 2009 article, a Crossroads resident describes this aspect of the neighborhood's appeal: "Eight tall windows pierce the brick walls of my Crossroads Arts District Loft, just around the corner from YJ's coffee shop, Birdies lingerie boutique and the Arts Incubator. For an aging hippie/painter/writer/lawyer, it doesn't get any better than this" (Around the Block – Living in the Crossroads Arts District, 2009, May 10). It is notable that he presents multiple identities, with the most professional last in the pecking order. The neighborhood allows his alternate identities to become salient. Within this context it is acceptable to refer to one's self as a hippie, painter or writer. The more respectable profession of lawyer, despite the years of education required, is the least desirable. As the article continues, the resident describes how he quickly became acclimated to his urban environs:

I moved to my new neighborhood last September. Within two weeks, I experienced my first First Friday: A jazz band played in my parking lot, street performers sang, danced and twirled flaming batons in the shadows of industrial buildings nearby and hundreds of arts devotees strolled the sidewalks.... I have traveled on foot to the library, post office, Power & Light District, restaurants, banks, art galleries, Crown Center, Cellar Rat wine

shop and my workplace. (Around the Block – Living in the Crossroads Arts District, 2009, May 10).

On the surface, these subjects entered into a very different existence. What is missing from this narrative is any hint of inconvenience, discomfort or adjustment. Apparently, he transitioned seamlessly into this urban existence. Perhaps the transition was facilitated by the luxurious residences available within the Crossroads. Or perhaps the safe and easy transition was aided by the fact that some buildings also offered security beyond the municipal police force. In 2010, the neighborhood also pursued a Community Improvement District to further improve safety and infrastructure within the neighborhood. As is evident, there is urban living without urban crime.

The interpellated consumers were not constituted as urban pioneers. The frontier had already been settled by Leedy and his compatriots. Rather, they were hip urbanites who wanted quick access to galleries and adventurous restaurants. The artist and the restaurateur took chances and struggled. The interpellated consumers patronized these individuals, but returned home to granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. In the process, they shed inconveniences such as yard maintenance and driving everywhere.

That the Crossroads became a place where the creative class could flourish safely in a cultured environment is ultimately clear in the way multiple elements of the “artistic” lifestyle are sutured together. In addition to galleries, developers saw a planned performing arts center as a key cultural amenity. This sentiment can be traced back to 1999, when the center was only a proposal. At that time, a real estate developer stated that, “[t]he Crossroads area has become the arts district of Kansas City, thanks to a grass-roots effort that started a number of years ago.... The performing arts center will solidify the integrity of that whole concept” (Gose, 1999, June 24). In 2011, when the center was finally under construction, the Boveri Realty Group used it to

market the Liberty Lofts project. A promotional article (i.e., advertorial) published in the *Kansas City Star*, opined that the “Liberty Lofts is the ideal place for people who want a home – or ‘a home away from home’ – near the new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.” Because even the most devout patron of the arts may not see the need to maintain a residence near the center, perhaps this is why much of the article details the expected economic benefits. Resorting to an aloof third person approach, the article states that, “Scanlon (real estate agent) expects downtown housing near the performing arts center to gain value once the center opens in September. Her research indicates that the demand for lofts and condominiums increased in other cities when new performing arts centers opened.” Furthermore, the article contends that “[o]nce those performing arts centers opened, the cities experienced more shopping venues, restaurants and improvements to infrastructure.” As evidence, the article offers the testimony of an economic development official from Philadelphia (Boveri Realty Group, 2011, February 26). Though the realtors also mention pedestrian access to the Crossroads, the performing arts center is the selling point here. Purchasing a second home, at a minimum of \$150,000, to sleep in after the symphony, seems quite far from Leedy’s original vision for the Crossroads.

In addition to residents, the Crossroads also attracted employers. Specifically, the neighborhood attracted companies involved in “creative services.” This interpellation process is similar to that of consumers, but raises a different set of questions.

Interpellating Producers

The neighborhood started as a place where artists could live and work. As the neighborhood gentrified, its daytime and nighttime populations changed. As demonstrated above, the nature of Crossroads residents changed drastically. The daytime population also changed, as employers sought office space within the neighborhood. These employers were

often engaged in fields Richard Florida would associate with the “creative class.” The artists who remained found themselves in a peculiar situation. They lived in a neighborhood based on their lifestyle and livelihood, but the neighborhood was becoming alien to them.

Such alienation is the duty of artists within a late-capitalist system. Though creative professionals may identify with bohemians in some respects, they also know themselves to be insiders. As Liu (2004) states when discussing workplace culture, “[w]hite-collars, in other words, [have] displaced the very experience of alienation onto outsiders who could do the heavy lifting of being alienated for them” (p. 100). Instead of declaring their alienation, white collar creative professionals enact it in various ways. However, these are all extensions of Frank’s (1997) notion of hip consumerism. In addition to being rebels in their leisure time, the creative class also communicates rebellion while on the clock. This could be through open display of tattoos, piercings, ironic T-shirts, etc. But these are all aesthetic choices. As Florida notes, these displays might upset some social conservatives. However, Florida also believes an inked creative professional is still a producer. Bohemian displays may symbolize subversion, but they are not true acts of subversion.

In the early 21st century, a collection of creative professionals gravitated to the Crossroads. A *Kansas City Star* article published in 1999 notes how bohemians and professionals were beginning to coexist at YJ’s, a neighborhood restaurant owned by an artist. The writer notes that, “[a]rtists mix and mingle there with the lawyers and architects who now have offices in the buildings of the city’s old Film Row. Realtors and developers stop by for cappuccino, egg salad sandwiches and gossip” (Thorson, 1999, April 25). At least at YJ’s class distinctions meant nothing and everyone lives in harmony. Such a community is, more over, good for business. This was noted by CCA president Shaul Jolles in 2007. She remarked that

"[t]he real development has been the evolution of who wants to be in the Crossroads." She added that, "[w]e have seen the arrivals of architectural firms, marketing companies and other sectors that weren't here in the past. It's inspiring to work here, and those companies are discovering that." A Crossroads real estate agent, Suzie Aron (future CCA president), added that "[i]t is going to add a whole new dimension to what has been going on here for years" (Harris, 2007 June 20).

Indeed, the Crossroads had added a new roster of employers. The businesses were largely those that employ the "creative class," which included advertising agencies VML, Bernstein & Rein (satellite office) and Barkley. The Crossroads also became home to two commercial animation firms. One of these business owners stated that, "[h]ere in the Crossroads ... there is a pool of art institute graduates who are very talented. I'd like to see the Crossroads become a digital SoHo like other cities have, with similar-minded companies doing related things" (Goforth, 2010, October 12).

Yet the bohemian ethos became accessible even to those further removed from the creative process. If one follows Florida's amorphous definition of the creative class, this makes sense. In 2009, entrepreneurs were invited to rent cubicles at an endeavor called Office Port KC. For \$400 per month, one could rent a "70-square-foot office station" (Collison, 2009, February 3). The *Kansas City Star's* commercial development reporter explained that the "incubator is relatively Spartan in an urban-chic way, but each rentable station is equipped with a desk, chair and lockable cabinet and is separated from its neighbor with a fiber divider" (ibid.). The reporter's use of the term "incubator" is notable because a previous Crossroads endeavor geared toward artists was called the "Arts Incubator." It served a purpose similar to what Leedy started in 1985. Now, it would seem, entrepreneurs were being offered *studio* space of their own.

The conflation of artists and creative class was on full display when the Downtown Council honored “urban heroes” at its annual luncheon in 2010. The commitment to art was exemplified by the selection of Rocco Landesman, president of the National Endowment of the Arts, as keynote speaker. The honorees included the founder of a nonprofit program for artists, but also the founder of a Crossroads-based architecture firm (Local ‘urban heroes’ to be saluted Friday, 2010, December 8). It makes sense to place architects within the creative class, especially the definition offered by Florida. However, even less creative companies wanted in on the Crossroads’ ethos. A construction company seeking to be the “the new, more progressive and more diverse, younger alternative” announced it would seek office space in the Crossroads (Collison, 2010 June 3). The ownership of the Kansas City Wizards (later Sporting KC) also relocated to the Crossroads in 2010 (Collison, 2010 November 2).

What Richard Florida has realized is that many desirable employees are concerned with inhabiting a hip identity. And hip employees tend to prefer living in the city, not the suburbs. So being near or within a hip neighborhood will enhance their image. What is left unsaid is why companies have been willing to allow employees to display a bohemian appearance. Furthermore, why would a company want to have its headquarters within an arts district? In Kansas City, offices are readily available in its traditional central business district, where the glass buildings communicate a sense of formality, not found in the Crossroads. The answer can be found within organizational communication literature. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) utilized rhetorical and critical theories to consider how organizations subtly control the actions of employees. They defined “the direct object of control as those members who can provide services essential to organizational goal attainment” (p. 180). In the case of a creative services firm, this would include graphic artists, web developers, copywriters and audio-visual producers.

Unlike sales and administrative staff, these professionals create the products most closely identified with the company. They are, in effect, the face of the company. Creative services workers also require more training than sales persons, so companies have an interest in retaining these creative class professionals by keeping them happy. Yet these companies have an even more pressing desire to keep these employees under control. Rather than issuing a list of explicit rules, companies pursue a policy of concertive control. Employees do not make decisions based on a list of rules, rather they have internalized the values and premises of the company.

Tompkins and Cheney (1985) describe how these values are instilled in employees:

Organizations offer inducements to the individual in exchange for accepting its decision premises as controlling his or her decisions. Organizationally appropriate decisions, once the premises are inculcated, are motivated by the universal psychological process of consistency maintenance and the individual's desire to "behave organizationally" (p. 189).

Creative class professionals within the Crossroads Arts District are continually induced. Just outside their door are 70 art galleries along with adventurous restaurants, hipster bars and coffee shops. If they wish, these professionals can live in a luxurious loft and walk to work. It is an environment unlike any other in the Kansas City metropolitan area. By locating within the Crossroads, a creative services company is immersed within a sea of cultural amenities. This element of urban renewal has been readily recognized by real estate professionals working in the neighborhood.

Real estate agent Suzy Aron emphasized the need for the Crossroads to maintain its distinctive character. However, her argument was based on an economic, rather than strictly bohemian, imperative. She argued that, "[w]e really need this to remain an area that can be

welcoming to entrepreneurs of all sorts. We don't want this to turn into a bar district or have a Starbucks on every corner." (Harris, 2007 June 20). If the neighborhood became less distinct, it would be hard to interpellate subjects. Being *in* the neighborhood would not have the same effect. A similar sentiment had been expressed earlier by a Crossroads real estate agent and property owner:

That area is incredibly significant to Kansas City because it's unique. It is something the suburbs can't offer These buildings provide an environment that really plays to the emotions of people. People walk into these large spaces, and they want an office there. It's an enjoyable place to be. It's an entirely different experience from the suburban office park (McClanahan, 2000, January 18).

The neighborhood, and its restored buildings, was imbued with an ineffable quality. Christina Boveri, another real estate agent headquartered in the Crossroads, viewed her work as fulfilling a civic duty. She emphasized that, "it's beyond real estate. It's more about the city and making a difference" (Collison, 2005, June 14).

It would appear that Kansas City was experiencing the creative revolution heralded by Richard Florida. The city had facilitated a neighborhood that was a cultural amenity, a neighborhood that attracted the creative class. The employees companies wanted – knowledge workers – were gravitating to the Crossroads. Companies were taking notice, with some even relocating to the neighborhood. But this is a rather cursory understanding of what transpired.

The neighborhood reconstituted itself. A neighborhood full of struggling artists may seem romantic, but it was not an economic boon to the city. Conversely, the creative class had the appearance of artists. They dressed in an avant-garde manner and frequented similar venues, but their bank accounts were considerably larger.

The creative class, however, were an imperfect proxy for artists, but did establish a symbiotic relationship with the artists. The creative class may see themselves as consubstantial with the art community, but the identification falls apart under scrutiny. As mentioned above, Burke (1969) explains consubstantiality as tenuous. There is a belief that some amount of substance is shared. To maintain this belief, similarities are highlighted and differences obscured (Drzwiecka, 2002). The creative class is induced to see themselves as artists. This allows them to *assume* that they are consubstantial with the artists who established the district.

The fine artists and commercial artists do have certain similarities. However, these similarities are mostly technical in nature. While both groups utilize similar skill sets, their motivations and end products differ significantly. The fine artist operates with a certain degree of autonomy. Granted, an artist may be commissioned to create something specific. Yet in those instances their end product is still art. The commercial artist uses her/his technical competence to produce appealing promotional materials. In a real way, they are involved in sales. The commercial artist is working toward the same goal as the marketing researcher and the account executive. Here, an example is illustrative. The Barkley advertising agency is the largest representative of the creative class in the Crossroads. It has earned accolades for its humorous commercials for the Sonic fast food chain. To categorize this as an artistic endeavor requires some casuistic stretching. However, art and advertising have long endured a strained relationship.

Frank (1997) contends that advertising has long had a tenuous relationship with the consumer culture it promotes. He believes a rebel ethos can be found in advertising agencies, going back at least to the 1950s. The employees of these firms must be convinced that they are doing something beyond selling fast food or other consumer goods. The creative class could

easily identify with other artifacts of the late capitalist work force. Why not be consubstantial with the financial services industry? After all, both play a part in late capitalism. If an advertising agency was placed within a traditional business district, it would be much harder to achieve concertive control over its creative employees. In fact, the Crossroads is situated between Kansas City's two most prominent business districts. A few blocks to the south, the Crown Center office complex features serious buildings of glass and steel. A few blocks to the north, similar office buildings are found in the city's central business district.

By placing their offices within the Crossroads, a "creative services" firm constitutes its employees as artists. They are dissociated from their larger role in the neo-liberal economy. Even if their end-product is the commodification of junk food, they are persuaded that they are consubstantial with the art community. They obviously know what their company does, but they can dissociate themselves with the help of constitutive rhetorics. As Alan Liu states in reference to workplace culture, "[w]e work here, but we're cool" (p. 78). Liu argues that contemporary life is dominated by a producer culture, in which private and professional lives overlap. In this configuration, companies need motivated workers: "Cool is an attitude or pose from within the belly of the beast, an effort to make one's very mode of inhabiting a cubicle express what in the 1960s would have been an 'alternative lifestyle' but now in the postindustrial 2000s is an alternative workstyle" (pp. 77-78). Locating your offices within a "cool" neighborhood is just another amenity, along with a relaxed dress code and Friday happy hours. In this way, the neighborhood itself is part of a process of concertive control. By locating itself within an arts district, an employer can emphasize its creative aspects. It demonstrates that the organization is about creativity, while obscuring other aspects.

Implications

In the early 21st century, a collection of underused warehouses underwent a major transformation. This area, where artists originally sought out affordable space for living and working, became thoroughly middle class. Or, rather, it became home to a special segment of the middle class dubbed the “creative class.” This shift from artists’ enclave to creative class neighborhood raises a number of issues. First, it shows how fine art and commercial art have been conflated. Second, counter-culture elements can be easily co-opted by commercial interests. Third, recent urban renewal efforts that co-opt counter-culture demonstrate what Burke (1937) called the “bureaucratization of the imaginative.” Fourth, the success of urban renewal is dependent upon its negation of suburban life. Finally, urban renewal efforts have constituted a new middle class identity. As such, these efforts are about intra-class mobility rather than social mobility.

Thanks to the efforts of Richard Florida and his disciples, the creative class has become a key component of urban renewal. On the surface, this seems like a movement that venerates art, but the creative class professionals are poor proxies for artists. This conflation of fine artists and commercial artists is the first implication I will discuss. In this context, art is anesthetized into little more than a skill set. This perspective contradicts why the neighborhood was actually founded. Leedy wanted a space where recent graduates could afford to experiment in the fine arts. If they merely wanted to perfect their skills, then there are plenty of opportunities for commercial artists. In fact, the Hallmark greeting card company is a short walk from the Crossroads, in the Crown Center neighborhood. But Leedy wanted the neighborhood to not only showcase fine art, he also wanted it to showcase edgy fine art. As the neighborhood evolved however, it became home to many creative class jobs. Furthermore, even its fine art offerings

moved more toward the mainstream. The Dolphin Gallery relocated to the West Bottoms neighborhood, which more closely resembles the early days of the Crossroads. Its building was taken over by the established Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. This leads to the next implication – co-optation of counterculture by commercial interests.

The evolution of identity in the Crossroads shows how counter culture can easily be co-opted. The purchase of the former Dolphin Gallery was executed personally by Kansas City banker R. Crosby Kemper. Of course, Kemper is a great patron of the arts in Kansas City. Yet his museum had been specifically called out by Leedy. Kemper emphasized that his museum would “help create and continue that lively scene” (Paul, 2007, December 8). However, his spokesperson described the purchase in more business-oriented terms: “Crosby doesn’t fool around. He bought it. He wants it open. That’s his style, to make things happen” (Thorson, 2008, November 12). Once the neighborhood was established, Kemper moved with swiftness and deftness inaccessible to the neighborhood’s founders. In a similar move, the Crossroads was selected as the site for Kansas City’s new Performing Arts Center. The effort was spearheaded by local philanthropist Shirley Helzberg. Helzberg possessed both wealth and influence in Kansas City. She also took over buildings within the district for business endeavors. Much like Kemper, Helzberg had advantages not apparent among struggling artists. This shift exemplifies how the Crossroads became a part of mainstream Kansas City. As the Crossroads went mainstream, former Crossroads artists were forced to move to new territory. In some cases business interests have followed artists to these new neighborhoods.. This leads to a third implication, the neoliberal economy is prone to what Burke calls the bureaucratization of the imaginative.

The Dolphin Gallery was not the only gallery to leave the Crossroads. Some galleries moved to nearby buildings to the east. This started what was called the “East Crossroads.” One sculptor based in the East Crossroads had harsh words for the original arts district:

The Crossroads proper has become what it started out to be an alternative to – a little staid and stuffy. These galleries down here are very cutting edge and alternative, with works the Crossroads can’t show or won’t show. All the artists at my gallery can do anything they want to. They can paint on the floor; they can and they have. (Smith, 2004, June 26).

A few years later, Leedy actually expressed a similar sentiment. As property values rose, he feared that “[t]he only kind of gallery will be able to survive in a gentrified Crossroads will be those that sell decorative art” (Harris, 2007, June 20). Here, Leedy pointed to the importance of marketing within urban renewal efforts. As galleries and artists left, the city continued to offer tax breaks to condominium developers. The city had experienced early success with this approach, so it became a routine or “bureaucratized” procedure (Burke, 1937). Meanwhile, the co-opted artists were being forced to exit.

The fourth implication of this chapter is that urban renewal efforts must brand themselves in contradistinction to the specter of suburbia. Edgy art galleries, with artists living in close proximity, are the reification of an anti-suburban attitude. Much like Hannigan’s (1997) fantasy city, these neighborhoods need to be about something. Inhabiting these places must have implications for one’s identity. As mentioned above, having a “Starbucks on every corner” would not make for a special place. In other words, a generic neighborhood would not allow for the sort of “hip consumerism” described by Frank (1997). An arts district filled with homogenous chain stores and restaurants would provide no content for co-optation. There would

be no rebellious element with which inhabitants could identify. There would be no one there to do the heavy lifting of alienation.

The final implication of this chapter is that urban renewal offers lateral mobility, rather than social mobility. Those who are already middle-class, are offered a different sort of middle-class environment. The creative class comprise a new urban gentry. Neighborhoods such as the Crossroads serve as “playgrounds” for the creative class, who have been deemed the right sort of urban residents. Of course, one can identify with the creative class through her/his consumption practices. That is, if one can afford to purchase a luxurious loft or dine out. Otherwise, it is another place where less-affluent members of society are excluded. The rhetoric of new urbanism interpellates the middle class as bohemians. Yet it also offers what Wander terms the Third Persona, excluding those who lack the resources to gain entry.

Chapter Three: Spaces and Places

Introduction

The growing influence of Richard Florida and his notion of the creative class should have been a boon to cities like Kansas City. In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida notes that this new group of young professionals prefers the sort of “street-level culture” found in cities. Unlike previous generations, the creative class craves the sort of stimulation most commonly found in urban environments – street performers, art galleries and sidewalk cafes. If Florida is right, then cities provide the best habitat for the creative class. However, the specter of suburbia can be rather stubborn and surprisingly adaptable. Recently suburbs have attempted to offer urban experiences, which has created yet another exigence for urban renewal efforts.

Recent urban renewal efforts can be placed under the larger banner of new urbanism, which includes efforts throughout the contemporary metropolis. In addition to renewing existing urban spaces, the movement also includes two suburban interventions. In some cases, new urban-style neighborhoods are erected within the vacant fields of suburbia. This is commonly called greenfield development. Another approach, called suburban infill, seeks to transform existing suburban space into urban space. Suburban infill is accomplished by erecting street-level buildings on the edge of existing parking lots. Hence, suburban streets are converted into urban streets, as they were within the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. (See: King Farm, Rockville, Maryland, 2008, June 11; Rockville Town Square, 2008, January 28; and Bethesda Row, 2006, December 5). In both greenfield development and suburban infill, new pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods have been erected within the sprawl of suburbia. And in both instances, urbanism is co-opted for suburban ends.

Suburban retrofits, such as those in Maryland, offer an apparently urban experience, while remaining within spaces which are decidedly suburban. As such, they keep the perceived positive attributes associated with the suburban experience. Unlike the difficulties of heterogeneity that urban places must contend with, suburban places have the advantage of (primarily white) homogeneity (Jackson, 1985; Gotham, 2002). Suburbs offer anesthetized urban experiences, taking away an appeal of urban life without have to deal with its negative side effects. This development demonstrates the endurance of the specter of suburbia and how suburbia no longer depends on the sort of pastoral perfection extolled by Catharine Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing (Jackson, 1985). Rather, suburbia is increasingly based on convenience, leisure and security.

As urban-style islands emerge in suburbia, urban renewal has faced the challenge of offering an even better product. Renewed urban environments must offer the sort of convenience, leisure and security dictated by suburban norms, but they must also offer an authentic urban experience. Urban neighborhoods must offer residents a chance to be part “of the city,” which is something suburbs cannot offer. Achieving this sort of authenticity, however, has required improvements to infrastructure. More specifically, cities have had to reintroduce an authentically urban infrastructure. During previous attempts at urban renewal, urban cores were diluted by suburban-style infrastructure. For example, restaurants were required to provide a minimum amount of parking spots. In some cases, urban restaurants even knocked down other buildings in order to provide parking lots. In still other cases, old streetfront buildings were replaced by buildings set back from the street, with sidewalks now abutting parking lots rather than storefronts. These parking lots break the continuity of a neighborhood’s streetscape. When

the urban infrastructure and architecture is degraded in this way, it is difficult to interpellate residents as urbanites.

Hence, cities have faced the challenge of effectively capitalizing on a renewed interest in urban living. As discussed in the previous chapter, a new group of urban pioneers have flocked to upscale residences in the Crossroads. Richard Florida specifically has promoted the notion that vibrant urban neighborhoods can attract desirable creative class workers. This in turn would attract desirable companies, ultimately boosting a city's economic situation. In the early twenty-first century, Kansas City recognized it had such an opportunity with the Crossroads Arts District. Based on the efforts of the local arts community, the neighborhood had gained a certain hip appeal. Based on this emergent cache, developers were first interested in rehabilitating warehouses to serve as loft apartments and condominiums.

As the Crossroads began to be rehabilitated however, it was a fluid space that failed to offer the conveniences of suburban or urban life. That is, it lacked both abundant parking and street-level culture. As the rehabilitation process evolved, the neighborhood began to offer more street-level culture in the form of storefronts and residences. In the process, the city began to push for improved infrastructure. The neighborhood began to evolve from an indeterminate space to a proper place, to draw upon Michel de Certeau's distinction between these two concepts. The Crossroads began life as an undefined space because it was not on the city's radar. At that time, it was an enclave for artists who were largely unconcerned with efforts to improve the neighborhood's infrastructure and streetscape. Once the neighborhood became an economic development opportunity, municipal intervention quickly led to place-making.

To make the Crossroads an economic development opportunity, the neighborhood needed to become an authentically urban place. This required infrastructure that would make residents

and visitors feel they were *in* the city. This was reflected in efforts to implement pedestrian and mass-transit infrastructure, mixed-use building associated with street-level culture, and common spaces. These urban interventions were intended to reconfigure notions of convenience and leisure, while maintaining their primacy. At the same time, there were private and municipal efforts to ensure the neighborhood seemed safe. Some of these efforts were blatant, such as building security. Other efforts have been more subtle, such as an express bus route that only serves historically white neighborhoods west of Troost Avenue, the city's racial dividing line (Gotham, 2002). In both instances, the goal was to create an authentic urban place without the negative aspects of city living. In working toward this end, the Kansas City Crossroads sought, I argue, to offer a place that counteracted the appeal of all forms of suburban development, including suburban new urbanism.

To make this argument, I will first describe the theoretical underpinnings of my analysis, which is based on de Certeau's distinction between spaces and places. I will then explain the Crossroads origins as a fluid space. This will be followed by a discussion of how the city intervened to foster a more stable urban place. This involved four placemaking practices, which will be examined individually. I will conclude with a discussion of the implications of such place-making practices.

Theory

In order to interpellate actual and potential Crossroads residents as urbanites, the neighborhood had to overcome the negative image that cities are chaotic, crime-ridden spaces. Unlike many suburban communities that clearly separate living, retail, and industrial areas into distinct zones, urban spaces often mix these different areas together. Such a mixture of different uses is even more apparent in urban renewal projects where buildings previously meant for one

purpose are reappropriated for something completely different. In addition to this image of the city as an often chaotic space, urban areas are also often imagined as crime ridden areas to be avoided. This is especially true of industrial areas and neglected neighborhoods that cities prefer to keep hidden from view. To overcome both of these problems, the Crossroads developers and the Kansas City government had to work to make the neighborhood appear as a comfortable place that could come out of hiding. To better understand how the city pursued these goals, I turn to de Certeau's distinction between spaces and places, along with Giddens's distinction between front and back regions.

For urban renewal projects to succeed, one of the first things that must happen is for the chaotic city spaces to be transformed into far more comfortable places. For French theorist Michel de Certeau, the distinction between place and space is primarily about stability and instability. According to de Certeau (1984), "a place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability" (p. 117). In contrast, a space "has thus none of the univocity or stability of a 'proper'." When one enters a place, she has a basic notion of what to expect. It may not exactly meet her expectations, but her experience will be proximate to the schema she has for that type of place. For example, one enters a restaurant with a certain set of expectations. In this way, places do not threaten one's ontological security. Spaces are a more chaotic and spontaneous experience. Imagine entering a restaurant that had only one very large rectangular table. That would not fit most people's schema for a restaurant. Yet it is this playfulness that makes something a space, or "practiced place" (p. 117). The actors within a space are less constrained by explicit and implicit norms. Hence, they are able to express themselves through subtle variations on everyday practices. This ability to express one's self is

what de Certeau calls enunciation. To explain enunciation, he focuses on seemingly mundane activities, such as “walking in the city.”

Stewart and Dickinson (2008) drew upon de Certeau while considering how walkers within a private shopping center were able to achieve enunciation. The authors specifically considered a shopping mall centered on an outdoors theme consistent with its position in Colorado’s rustic frontier. Stewart and Dickinson (2008) note that the shopping center is “not just a stage on which individuals perform their identities, but it is also the material structure that enables and constrains the performance of very particular identities” (p. 287). As walkers entered the mall, they were interpellated as outdoors-loving Coloradans. More important, though, they were interpellated as outdoors-loving consumers. The mall was a place, where certain behaviors were allowed and others disallowed. In this way, places require subjects to surrender some degree of freedom found in spaces.

As a critical scholar, de Certeau clearly preferred the freedom of spaces to the stability of places. However, most Americans are not critical scholars and actually prefer stability to instability. Even as some suburban emigres enjoy the new freedoms of city life, they also desire an environment that is stable and predictable. For an urban renewal project to succeed, it must possess both place-like and space-like qualities. While useful, de Certeau’s distinction ignores the possibility that two individuals might experience an environment differently – one person’s space is another person’s place. Furthermore, de Certeau’s distinction invites the audience to view municipal governments as nefariously directing the movements of citizens. Morris (2004) notes that de Certeau reduces walking to “the official” and “the everyday.” Of course, “[s]ocial practices of walking rarely conform to this either/or model. It is never simply a case of ‘us’ and them,’ or individual walkers versus city authorities who seek to organize the movement and

dispositions of bodies in urban space, as Certeau's model implies" (Morris, 2004, p. 679). While a variety of factors may determine whether one views an environment as a place or a space, one's mode of transit is among the most important. Writing in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Dickinson (1997) explains how adopting the "pedestrian gaze" allows one to see past the contrived unified nature of an urban renewal project. In Old Pasadena Dickinson, notes automobile passengers will likely see a unified theme, but this theme is more fragmented for pedestrians. As Dickinson states, "[m]ore profoundly, this fragmentation opens the site to multiple interpretations, and in so doing offers to visitors the chance to take the resources proffered and turn them to their own uses" (p. 13). The challenge for urban renewal projects is to foster an environment that offers an increased sense of agency, vis-à-vis suburban places. At the same time, many aspects of the suburban place are still desired, and have been woven into urban renewal projects. This is particularly true in relation to overt and subtle security measures that enhance the ontological security of these new urbanites.

Urban environments offer an increased sense of agency by simply offering pedestrian-friendly environments, in which individuals can resist what Jackson (1985) calls automobility. This term refers to the dependence on automobile travel within the U.S. As Thrift (2004) states, "a hundred years or so after the birth of automobility, the experience of driving is sinking in to our 'technological unconscious' and producing a phenomenology that we increasingly take for granted but which in fact is historically novel" (p. 41). Urban areas offer a space where automobility can be subverted and multi-modal agency is possible. Multimodal agency refers to an environment where individuals have access to a variety of transit modes. This includes familiar modes of transit, such as buses, rail and taxis. However, cities and private companies increasingly offer novel modes of transit, such as car-sharing and bicycle-sharing programs.

This is in contrast to a suburban environment, where mobility and automobility are virtually synonymous. As traffic congestion increases in metropolitan areas, cities can argue that multi-modal agency is superior to automobility. Even as cities maximize this inherent advantage, they must also address the perception that urban areas are inherently dangerous.

In addition to creating stable places out of chaotic spaces, urban renewal developers must also transform city areas from hidden back regions to desirable front regions, distinct regions most often created by restricting access for various groups of people. In the 1980s, Anthony Giddens applied Erving Goffman's notion of front stage, or areas that are publicly displayed, and back stage, areas that are hidden from view, to describe the process of urban decay. Giddens (1984), argued that "[t]he access of those in more affluent sectors of housing markets to relatively easy transfer of property underlies the 'flight to the suburbs,' changing city centers from regions of frontal display to back regions of urban decay, which the 'respectable classes' avoid" (1984, p. 130). These back regions do not make their way into a city's promotional materials. As such, these back regions do not receive as much attention as the front regions, which cities may use to lure residents and tourists. To understand this distinction, it might help to consider the design of a house. Ozaki (2003) notes how the English house has been segregated into front regions, such as the parlor, and back regions, such as the kitchen. Urban showcase neighborhoods are analogous to the parlor in the sense that both are places where guests are received. In the case of the English house, physical walls enclosed distinct regions. Since walled cities have not been en vogue for centuries, municipalities pursue more subtle gestures that enclose front regions from back regions. About this, Giddens (1984) explains, "[r]egionalization encloses zones of time-space, enclosure permitting the sustaining of distinctive relations between 'front' and 'back' regions, which actors employ in organising the contextuality

of action and the sustaining of ontological security” (p. 124). Throughout the history of suburbia, a variety of practices have been used to achieve enclosure. For example, restrictive covenants prevented a variety of races from inhabiting suburban environments. These measures limited the access of non-whites to desirable suburban environments, in both a spatial and temporal sense. Though these overtly racist practices are no longer legally tenable, subtler practices may produce similar results. For example, interstate highways may not directly link front regions and back regions. Furthermore, bus routes may not provide direct links between front and back regions. Private security forces, including quasi-public entities, may also offer safety measures beyond those offered by public police forces. These measures may seem unrelated to rhetorical criticism. However, McKerrow (1999) laments that too often critics maintain the status quo by ignoring the role of space and time within discourse. McKerrow notes that, “[s]pace-time structures life, and through that influence, affects discourse in unseen, unfelt ways” (p. 272). By introducing these measures, cities and private developers can communicate a sense of safety and stability.

Urban renewal depends upon an interesting mix of space and place. By offering the pedestrian gaze (Dickinson, 1997) and multi-modal agency, urban areas offer a level of agency not found within most suburbs. If cities can convince people of the virtues of pedestrianism, then they have a natural advantage. However, cities must also deal with the persistent notion that urban areas are chaotic and dangerous spaces. This can be addressed by subtle measures that enclose these front regions from nearby back regions. In the following section, I consider how Kansas City pursued these goals. The Crossroads, a former industrial region, has been restructured through infrastructure measures that increase stability. These measures are geared toward making it easier for inhabitants to become pedestrians. As inhabitants disembled

themselves from their automobiles, they also lose some of the insulation that separated them from the chaotic urban space. As such, measures have been pursued that increasingly demarcate urban front regions from back regions.

The Crossroads as a Space

The Crossroads began in an informal manner. Jim Leedy had previously tried to establish a similar space in midtown Kansas City's Westport neighborhood. However, gentrification forced him out of that neighborhood. In that instance, the rent on his property became too expensive. To prevent this from happening again, he purchased a building in a warehouse district south of Kansas City's central business district. By owning the building, there was some permanence. However, he did not design the space for permanent residents. The original building was intended as a transitional space for artists who had recently graduated from the Kansas City Art Institute. In this space, they were afforded access to the type of expensive tools they had used in art school but could not afford to purchase themselves. As the neighborhood evolved, Leedy and these artists attracted other galleries. However, Leedy was not operating based on a master plan. He may have had a vision, but he was not acting as a real estate developer.

As the Crossroads began to take shape, the city did not at first seem to notice the artists and galleries flocking to the warehouse district. Suzy Aron, a long-time real estate agent in the neighborhood, believes the city originally had a laissez-faire attitude toward the Crossroads inhabitants. She explains that, "[i]n the beginning, nobody was legal, but nobody outside of the neighborhood gave a damn about the buildings so no one was looking at them. You could do the work yourself and not have to worry about the stringent codes the city used with other

developers." (Kelly and Gay, September 2, 2007). If the city knew about the nascent arts district, it did not take a keen interest in its development. This arrangement seemed to suit Leedy.

The chance to be left alone seemed attractive to Leedy and other Crossroads artists, who were looking for a space, rather than a place. The Crossroads of the 1980s and early 1990s presented a unique opportunity for artists to inhabit and shape the neighborhood. It should be noted that the Crossroads had once been a vibrant warehouse district. For example, the Old Film Row sub-district served as a regional distribution hub for motion pictures. When artists arrived in the mid-1980s, the warehouses were no longer near capacity. This allowed them to find affordable spaces to work, live and display their art. As the neighborhood became an economic opportunity, its place-like qualities were recovered. The space was disciplined and the neighborhood was reconstituted as a hip urban enclave for the middle class. To rephrase an earlier quote, the city began to “give a damn” about the buildings.

From an economic perspective, the city established the “placemaking dividend,” a neologism coined by the influential Urban Land Institute. It describes the economic benefits of establishing a “place.” While there is no evidence that the ULI is familiar with de Certeau, the process of placemaking is close to how he conceives of place. ULI explains that the placemaking dividend “occurs when individual real estate projects are so well designed and interconnected that they work as one integrated place” (Booth, Leonard, Pawlukiewicz). This is the sort of stability de Certeau stressed.

As the Crossroads went from neglected enclave to economic development, it experienced a structural transformation. Through government intervention and private development, the neighborhood would assume the qualities of an identifiable place. In the next section, I will first explain the structural changes that fostered the neighborhood’s transformation. More

specifically, I will examine four “placemaking” practices that emerged within the neighborhood. For each practice, I will offer the debate surrounding them and explain how such intervention would interpellate visitors.

Intervention in the Urban Frontier

At first, it may be difficult to situate the frontier mentality within contemporary urban renewal. It is easier to think of the frontier as open spaces, not underused urban configurations. However, Dorsey (1995) explains that the “[frontier] myth tells the origin of how brave individuals contend with an unknown and hostile frontier, coming together as a community to forge a social covenant reflecting its cherished ideals” (p. 4). In a suburbanized nation, it is possible for pioneers to homestead within an urban frontier because it is not normal to live in the city. For many Americans, cities have become a foreign and seemingly dangerous place. Urban spaces throughout the U.S. have lost both residential and industrial populations, and buildings that were once sites of productivity have been left fallow. As such, vast stretches of urban America have reverted to frontier conditions. In Giddens’s (1984) terms, the twentieth century saw urban areas transform from front regions to back regions. This is to say that they became “unknown and hostile frontiers” (Dorsey, 1995). Moreover, these neglected urban spaces have been treated as frontiers. This was true in the Crossroads Arts District where Jim Leedy established a new frontier for young artists. In retrospect, he conceded that he moved in during a lull in economic activity for the neighborhood. He specifically stated that, “[the Crossroads] was fairly blighted, but it was an area that inevitably had to be developed because of its proximity to Crown Center and downtown” (Lapp, 2002, December 29). Leedy has a point here. The Crossroads sat directly between Crown Center, headquarters of Hallmark Cards, and Kansas

City's central business district. These are two front regions where the city had already concentrated much of its redevelopment energies.

Though the artists would eventually be rhetorically transformed into developers, initially they simply repurposed the underused warehouses. Once the city recognized the redevelopment opportunity, it took over the process. This redevelopment process was facilitated through government incentives, the import of which will be discussed in chapter four. For now, it should be noted that these incentives came with strings attached. These strings attached to the economic incentives transformed the space into an organized, recognizable neighborhood. In exchange for receiving incentives, the developers were expected to help transform the neighborhood into a more proper urban place. They were, in essence, expected to tame the urban frontier. After reviewing the incentive applications, I have identified four placemaking practices the city encouraged. First, the city focused on improving the pedestrian infrastructure in the Crossroads. This entailed not only improving sidewalks, but also making it easier for pedestrians to use mass transit when traveling to and from the Crossroads. Second, the city encouraged mixed-use development throughout the Crossroads. Third, the city has shown concern for developing common spaces for citizens, such as parks and sidewalks. These three placemaking practices are inconsistent with the norms of suburbia, but the fourth placemaking practice demonstrates the persistence of the specter of suburbia. In addition to creating a vibrant urban environment, the city also sought to make sure the Crossroads seemed safe. Hence, security is the fourth placemaking practice that will be discussed below.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The success of urban renewal depends on convincing people to live closer together, often in smaller environments. It is in contrast to the suburban vision of space articulated in GM's

Futurama film mentioned in the opening chapter. This is more than a mere coincidence. The population density of an area is closely related to the preferred form of transit in that area. Within the suburbs, walking to the store is a difficult proposition. An area sprawling with single-family homes, curvilinear streets and low-rise buildings necessitates motorized travel. Furthermore, such spaces necessitate individual motorized travel, as even walking to a bus stop is a considerable task within many suburban environments. Strip malls are set far back from the road, with expansive parking lots between streets and buildings. Roads are often wide, making it difficult for pedestrians to cross multiple lanes. Subdivisions are often physically separated from commercial developments. Taken together, these elements naturally cause suburbanites to become motorists. That is, suburbanites are immobile without a piece of machinery. As Paul Krugman (2008, May 19) has observed, the infrastructure of the U.S. leaves many people “stranded in suburbia.” If the personal automobile ceases to be a viable option, much of the population will be left with few other options. Due to the lack of a grid pattern, it has also been difficult to implement mass transit within suburban environments. Mass transit may seem like a separate issue, but it is closely linked to pedestrianism.

In an urban environment, mobility is more varied than within a suburban environment. Higher population density often means destinations are nearby. One could easily walk to the store or to her workplace. Or, one could easily walk to a mass transit station. Furthermore, driving is actually less convenient in these areas. In some cases, walking to a destination is a quicker mode of transit because of traffic and one-way streets. This is especially true when factoring in the scarcity of parking in urban environments. In contrast, the suburbs offer plentiful and simple parking. In the suburbs, one often feels like an autonomous agent free to go wherever and whenever she wants.

The automobile and pedestrianism can in fact both be linked to the God term “freedom.” Indeed, the personal automobile does afford one a good deal of freedom. When driving an automobile, the potential to go almost anywhere exists. In the abstract, this makes much sense. But in the real world the automobile-bias of modern infrastructure has reduced freedom. When everyone must drive a car, the result is a glut of automobiles on the road. When communities are built to accommodate only automobiles, then other forms of transit become difficult to use. On the “open road,” the driver indeed enjoys incredible freedom and agency. But of course, most commuters are more familiar with rush hour gridlock than an open road.

Within an urban environment, the individual is interpellated as a multi-modal agent. When her feet touch down upon the street, she has options. She is not tethered to a cumbersome automobile. Within contemporary urban environments, such multi-modal agency is increasingly possible. Sizable cities now offer increasingly fashionable mass transit options, such as light rail transit and “modern streetcars.” In Kansas City, a bus rapid transit (BRT) line connects the Crossroads with other urban neighborhoods. In many cities companies like Zipcar offer car-sharing, and some cities have also begun to offer bike sharing programs. Of course, taxi cabs continue to be a transit option in all cities. These options allow one to move through an urban environment autonomously without needing to worry about where to park or how to get home after a few drinks.

The connection between freedom and transportation is nothing new. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau compares rail travel to incarceration. He contends that during rail travel, “[t]he unchanging traveler is pigeonholed, numbered, and regulated in the grid of the railway car, which is a perfect actualization of the rational utopia” (p. 111). De Certeau believes this mode of travel is incarceration. Indeed, “[o]nly the restrooms offer an escape from the

closed system” (p. 111). At the end of the train trip, “[e]veryone goes back to work at the place he has been given, in the office of the workshop. The incarceration-vacation is over” (p. 114). De Certau’s reference point here was likely Paris, not the sprawling automobile-dependent cities of the U.S. Outside of the Northeast corridor, train travel is alien to most Americans. What is familiar, however, is automobile travel, as many Americans engage in long commutes on a daily basis. De Certau’s train passenger may be incarcerated, but so are automobile commuters.

Automobile-dependence is perpetuated, however, by the premise that “driving an automobile means personal freedom.” Under ideal conditions, a motorist could go anywhere. However, in a metropolitan context driving a car is often a form of incarceration. The motorist may believe herself to have agency, but it is always constrained by various factors (e.g., road conditions, traffic, accidents). In contrast, urban environments promote a different conception of agency and freedom that depends on acceptance of a different premise. That is, “having multiple modes of transit means personal freedom.” This is what is meant by multi-modal agency. To pursue multi-modal agency, one must first reject the accepted notion of personal freedom. Instead, one must accept that driving a personal automobile may not mean more agency. At times it may be easier to walk or ride a bicycle to one’s destination. After moving away from the accepted premise, one may begin to view driving as laborious and time-consuming.

So what is standing in the way of the masses re-embracing multi-modal agency? In Kansas City there has been considerable tension between automobile-oriented and multi-modal approaches to infrastructure. As the Crossroads developed, it was haunted by the specter of suburbia, which was manifested in the tension between accommodating cars and accommodating pedestrians. This tension was evident in 1998, when the developers of Lidia’s restaurant drafted a proposal for tax-increment financing in the Freight House Building, which was a short walk

from the existing galleries of the Crossroads. The proposal (22nd & Main Tax Increment Financing Plan, 1998) calls for an “assortment of upscale destination restaurants and related uses, together with parking, necessary utilities, street improvements and appurtenances necessary to eliminate the blighting conditions. The Plan is also designed to encourage quality restaurant tenants to locate within the Redevelopment Project Area” (p. 5). While justifying this endeavor, the developer offers a familiar narrative of urban decline. The area is portrayed as the victim of economic and infrastructure changes. There is also a direct attack on suburbanization: “suburban sprawl and America’s fervent belief in the inherent goodness of growth have taken their toll on inner city areas like the Redevelopment Area, leaving them blighted and neglected.” (p. 3/86 pdf). The redevelopment project bemoans “suburban sprawl,” but seeks to offer an automobile-dependent “destination.”

The document’s ‘Redevelopment Plan Objectives’ seem to offer both sides of the coin here. On the one hand, the tenth and final objective is to “provide pedestrian improvements within the neighborhood immediately abutting the Redevelopment Area.” However, another objective (i.e., number seven) promises to supply 300-350 new parking spaces (22nd and Main TIF, 1998). Of course, this original proposal was not truly about creating an urban neighborhood. Instead, it was about developing a destination. The plan, in fact, focused on redeveloping the Freight House building to hold three upscale restaurants. Given this reality, the prescribed pedestrian improvements might have been primarily aesthetic. Crumbling sidewalks may have hurt the building’s “curb appeal.”

When the 22nd and Main TIF application was amended, it was expanded to include the nearby arts community. A brief “Crossroads District Plan” is laid out in this amendment (First Amendment, 1999). Furthermore, the importance of the nearby artists is recognized. However,

the First Amendment continues to stress the importance of parking spaces. The original request for 300-350 parking spaces is even expanded to 500-600. To be fair, the amendment also questions the need for the proposed 23rd Street Connector. Instead, it proposes light rail as an alternative. Indeed since this document was promulgated, there has been an active debate over mass transit in Kansas City. Still, the need for parking remains a central assumption.

Light rail initiatives have appeared on multiple Kansas City ballots. Though voters approved one plan, it was later found to be financially impracticable. Currently, Kansas City has something of a compromise in its MAX bus line. There has been some debate about whether the line is actually an example of Bus Rapid Transit, or merely an express bus line. As it relates to place making, this is an important distinction. The MAX line features upgraded bus stops, with digital signs that display the arrival time of the next bus which add to the stability of the transit system. Due to the investment, the bus stops seem permanent. More importantly, measures make the system faster than conventional buses and sometimes faster than automobile travel (Recapturing global leadership in Bus Rapid Transit, 2011).

In the Old Film Row sub-district, there have also been attempts at placemaking through pedestrian infrastructure. Design guidelines for the sub-district called for “pedestrian-oriented signs” (Old Film Row Urban Design Concept Plan, 2005, p. 17), rather than signs geared toward motorists. The guidelines also disciplined the sidewalks considerably. They called for “zero setback” from the public right-of-way, meaning that structures should abut the sidewalk. Hence pedestrians would have the easiest access to businesses. The only exception would be outdoor cafes, which could be set back farther to make room for sidewalk seating. Some of the other pedestrian-oriented details are seemingly minute. For example, “seasonal planters” were not allowed to impede pedestrian traffic so that the sidewalk would be accessible at all times. These

minor guidelines would make the sidewalk a predictable trafficway for pedestrians. The tension between pedestrians and automobiles is, however, still evident within the guidelines. For example, parking lots adjacent to the public right-of-way were to be “screened” by shrubbery. While the parking lots would be obscured, they would still abut the public right of way, disrupting the urban streetscape.

Within the Old Film Row sub-district, Shirley Helzberg was serving as both a developer and philanthropist. Her role as philanthropist was connected to the nearby performing arts center. She also restored two buildings in the area: The Webster House and Vitagraph Film Exchange Building. The latter restoration also included work on the nearby streetscape. About this, Helzberg stated, “I wanted it to be pedestrian-friendly, like in New York, from Union Station all the way to the performing arts center and then on to downtown” (Collison, 2010, May 13). It is notable that Helzberg draws on the archetypal American city to make her point.

Perhaps the biggest incentive to pedestrianism in Kansas City occurred in 2006, when the city altered a policy that had favored automobility over pedestrianism. Up to this point, the city had required most businesses to offer off-street parking. After receiving complaints about the ordinance, the city began to meet with the Crossroads Community Association and other interested parties. Following these meetings, the City Planning & Development Department reported that:

Several participants stated that the city’s off-street parking requirements were onerous and impeding development. There was discussion that it was not the actual shortage of spaces but the “requirement” to provide spaces that were causing businesses to delay opening in the area or halting development plans, or even remove existing buildings to expose surface parking lots. (Staff Report, p. 1, 2006, July 18).

The report went as far as to recommend no parking requirements for businesses in the downtown loop, directly north of the Crossroads. As for the Crossroads, the report proposed that “along ‘pedestrian’ streets (to be determined and portrayed on a map) within the remainder of downtown (including city market and Crossroads) ... no off-street parking shall be required for nonresidential uses” (p. 2). When the actual ordinance was filed, it loosened parking requirements in the Crossroads, but did not eliminate them. The resulting ordinance would actually favor small businesses by allowing retail establishments occupying 4,000 square feet or fewer and restaurants occupying 2,000 square feet or fewer to operate without off-street parking (Second Committee Substitute for Ordinance No. 060794).

Eventually, the city recognized the value of the Crossroads, but struggled with how to increase the district’s connection with the rest of the city. One method of tapping into its vitality was through pedestrian connections. The Crossroads sits between two city-supported projects, Union Station and the Power & Light District. The city pursued methods for connecting the Crossroads to both of these developments. The Crossroads would be connected to Union Station by converting an existing railroad bridge (McClanahan, 2005, November 4), but the proposal to connect the neighborhood to the Power & Light district was more complex since the two areas are divided by a stretch of interstate. In 2008 the city funded a study about “topping” the interstate, which would reconnect the Crossroads with downtown (Collison, 2008, October 14). The proposed “lid” over the freeway would connect the Crossroads to the main part of downtown. However, some thought the funds would be better used to beautify the Crossroads itself. David Morris, a board member of the Crossroads Community Association, opined that, “[t]he Crossroads has terrible infrastructure — sidewalks and curbs and gutters and all kinds of issues that to small-business owners are way more important than capping the bridges” (Horsley,

2010, April 5). A search of *Kansas City Star* archives shows no mention of the proposed lid since 2010. Instead, the city seems to be focused on the small-scale infrastructure projects on two major Crossroads thoroughfares – 20th Street and Grand Boulevard.

In 2010, the city was urged to focus on improving infrastructure within the Crossroads, specifically the 20th Street corridor. A *Kansas City Star* editorial promoting the 20th Street beautification project began with these words: “For decades, Kansas City has flagrantly neglected an important street running through the heart of the city’s urban-revival gem, the Crossroads Arts District, just south of the freeway loop.” (20th Street downtown desperately needs beautification., 2010, March 19). The plan also had the support of the Downtown Council (Welcome plans underway to revamp stretch of KC’s 20th Street, 2010 June 4). A condominium developer, Kevin McGowan, was already investing \$300,000 to improve infrastructure on 20th Street. He urged the city to also invest in improving the street, arguing that, “downtown shouldn’t lack curb appeal. It makes it harder to draw people.” (20th Street downtown desperately needs beautification., 2010, March 19).

A different initiative sought to improve Grand Avenue, a major Crossroads thoroughfare. The initiative, called “Make Grand Grand,” was focused on transforming Grand into a “complete street” that would accommodate motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. An architect involved in the project offered an economic rationale for this project, arguing, “[w]e’re beginning with the premise that streets that are pedestrian-friendly are also streets that are more economically valuable for investors and retailers” (Collison, 2011, June 21).

It is notable that both beautification projects were promoted in economic, rather than human, terms. Sure, people would enjoy the improvements. However, their enjoyment needed to be transformed into an economic benefit. This sentiment had been previously expressed by

Bill Dietrich, president and CEO of the Downtown Council. Dietrich stated that, "[s]mall entrepreneurial business is incredibly important to the sustainability and vitality of downtown A lot of the projects we're working on are meant to bring more pedestrians downtown, more street retail, making it more lively for people - for our residents, our office workers and for the visitors" (Paul, 2005, February 8).

A mix of uses

One legacy of suburbia is the preference for segregated uses, as residences, retail and offices are all found in separate buildings. This is taken for granted, but it is also codified through zoning laws. As urban renewal advocates make their case, they must contest with this legacy. In the Crossroads Arts District, the city has made an effort to encourage mixed-use development. The need for mixed-use development in the area was recognized as early as 1998 in the FOCUS report. In reference to the 18th Street corridor, the report stated that,

It will therefore be a focus of reinvestment efforts, both public and private, to improve the pedestrian environment, infill vacant lots with buildings and encourage the variety of businesses that can capitalize on the significance of the cultural linkage. Business types would be of a mixed-use variety offering places to live, work, learn and shop. (p. 85)

A preference for mixed-use development was also evident in the design guidelines for the Old Film Row sub-district. The plan called for office, and residential uses (p. 13). Parking structures, if present, were to be mixed use – commercial at ground level, residential on upper levels (p. 206). There was also a preference for height: “[m]ulti-level buildings are preferred in Old Film Row. Retail, restaurants, art galleries and other pedestrian intensive uses should be located at the street level. Upper levels are appropriate for office and/or residential” (p. 206). This plan demonstrated the difference between a mixed-use place and a mere space. Though the

city is not prescribing use, it is describing and incentivizing specific uses. In a space, the people are involved in deciding use.

Initially the 22nd and Main TIF proposal was focused on single-use development. It specifically called for “commercial (restaurants) and associated uses” (p. 9). This changed in the first amendment to the plan. The First Amendment calls for an “Urban Village” to be developed in the area. The First Amendment also replaces the phrase “General Land Use” with “Mixed Use – Residential, Commercial, and Light Industrial” (p. 6). The terms “mixed use” and “urban village” are actually quite similar, but they serve different purposes. Mixed-use is a cold, technical term. It is easy to imagine such a term being uttered by city planners and other government bureaucrats. The term reminds one that the use of a building is dictated by a governmental entity, rather than a business owner. At the same time, it reduces buildings to their economic value. To deem a building “mixed use” is to describe it accurately, but also dispassionately. In contrast, to call a neighborhood a village is to conjure images of people and their social relationships. The term conjures images of people moving about the village, which highlights the fact that a village requires villagers. To be a villager is to be more than just producer or consumer. Conversely, a mixed-use development has its users, but the term refers primarily to business persons. It is used as an office, shop, restaurant, etc. In a village, people associate freely (similar to the ideal third place) rather than merely acting as consumers.

The 19th and Central TIF plan also urged mixed-use development in the area. The plan promised to “foster an urban live-work environment by developing office, studio, retail and residential units. The Plan will strengthen the district of creative arts-related businesses in the area” (p. 4). The 19th and Central plan also employed an appeal to authority, by invoking two previous municipal reports: the FOCUS Plan and the Downtown Industrial Area Plan. “The best

and most economically viable use for the property in the Redevelopment Area is mixed-use – residential, commercial, and light industrial – which contribute to the live-work environment envisioned in the Downtown Industrial Plan and in the FOCUS Plan” (p. 10). Here the FOCUS plan is used rhetorically as both an appeal to authority and as a populist appeal. The report has authority because it was commissioned and published by the city. Since the report was created by citizens, it also has a certain populist characteristic. Even though the citizens involved were selected to participate, it still carries the appearance of being removed from the municipal bureaucracy.

Hence, the value of mixed-use development was recognized. It was seen as a method for creating vital urban neighborhoods. However, mixed-use should never be confused with unprescribed-use. In some cases, the city employs zoning regulations to prescribe use. In other cases, preferred use is codified through economic incentives. In either case, predictability and stability are introduced.

The Commons

As mentioned in Chapter One, suburbia has seen the commons diminish. Privately-run shopping malls have proven to be a poor proxy for the town square. These private spaces are not democratic, as their owners and managers control them. A similar situation may be found in the Home Owner’s Associations of suburban neighborhoods. This concern can be seen in recent calls for “third places.” These are liminal spaces that lie between one’s home and workplace. However, they are still privately-run places. The commons, by contrast, are spaces that are owned by the public. The iconic town square is an ideal example of the commons. At its best, it was a place where one could speak his mind and air his grievances, but not all commons are, of course, equal. Here I will focus on two forms of the commons. First, I will consider how

sidewalks serve this purpose. This is distinct from the utilitarian, transit function discussed above. More specifically, I will consider the interaction between the public right-of-way and third places. Next, I will look at public parks.

In an urban environment, sidewalks serve as both a transit route and a place. Oftentimes an urban pedestrian is simultaneously going somewhere and already somewhere. This is demonstrated by the presence of street performers, street vendors and sidewalk cafes. Whereas Kansas City's 1998 FOCUS report emphasized sidewalks as a transit route, the city would later also encourage placemaking on its sidewalks. One way Kansas City sought to liven up its sidewalks was by making it easier to establish sidewalk cafes. It should first be noted that in Kansas City, all streets deemed boulevards are administered by the city's Parks and Recreation Commission. As such, the streets, including the sidewalks, are technically public parks. This conflation dates back to the century-old vision of landscape architect George Kessler (*Boulevard & Parkway Standards of Kansas City, Missouri*, 2010, January). The city has been reluctant to abandon Kessler's vision by allowing private developers to encroach on what is technically a public park. However, in 2003 the Parks and Recreation Commission found a rationale to allow sidewalk cafes on boulevards. In its brochure on sidewalk cafes, the commission states that, "[t]he City Charter specifically prohibits the use of park property for private purposes unless it can also be shown to benefit the public. Sidewalk café'[sic] benefit the public with license/rental fees and provide additional public amenities through enhanced street life" (*Sidewalk Cafes*). The first business to take advantage of this new allowance was the Cashew, a bar on the Crossroads section of Grand Boulevard (*ibid.*).

The city's growing appreciation for street-level culture was further demonstrated in its 2010 Greater Downtown Area Plan (GDAP). In a section titled 'Orientation and Setbacks,' the

report calls for new buildings to directly abut the sidewalks – “Buildings should define the street edge” (p. 96). However, “[a]dditional set back may be considered for purposes that augment street level pedestrian activity and extend the public realm” (p. 96). Some of the suggested purposes for additional setback included “outdoor café,” “public plaza,” and “sidewalk retail.” In addition to these proposed uses, Kansas City has also attempted to find space for public parks within the Crossroads.

Whereas the urban sidewalk immerses individuals within a vibrant street culture, the urban park provides a chance to remove one’s self from this hectic environment and briefly commune with nature. Such parks may also provide recreational opportunities for children and adults. A distinction is in order here. Cities often build large parks, such as New York’s iconic Central Park and San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. These sprawling parks are great amenities for those who live nearby. Others may also travel to such parks, treating them as recreational destinations. However, neighborhoods may also be served by smaller parks. These are sometimes called pocket parks. Within Kansas City’s downtown, there are several of these smaller parks. On a nice day, downtown office workers might have lunch in Illus Davis Park or Barney Allis Plaza. In Crown Center, Washington Park serves a similar function. In the Crossroads, which has far more residents, no such options exist. The only recreational park the Crossroads is even close to is Penn Valley Park, which residents must reach by car. Penn Valley is a sprawling destination-park within Kansas City’s urban core. However, it is not a neighborhood park.

In 2007, there was a dispute about the use of a former Superfund site in the Crossroads Arts District. A group of developers envisioned building more condominiums on the site. Instead of rehabilitating an existing building, they planned to build a new structure. An area

property owner, Tom Levitt, wanted, instead, for it to be a neighborhood park honoring Jim Leedy. Levitt complained that the nearest parks were not within walking distance and Leedy voiced his support for building a park, rather than more residences. Leedy opined that, "[w]e're building and putting in condos and space for people to live without a real place for those people to go" (Collison, 2007, May 4).

The need for common space in the Crossroads did not escape the city either. The first amendment to the 22nd and Main TIF proposal cites the need to "[p]rovide sufficient open space for gatherings and recreation" (p. 3). The second amendment calls for professionals in the community to help with the design of an "open/gathering space" (p. 6). The key term here is "professionals," rather than just residents or even citizens. It makes sense to involve architects and other designers in the process. However, it could be done in collaboration with other constituents. What is meant by "open/gathering space" is also unclear. This could mean a variety of things. For example, it could be a city-owned concert pavilion that charges admission fees or a public park. In the face of municipal inaction, a private entity eventually stepped up to fill the void.

In 2010, local company DST established what it called a "community garden" in the Crossroads neighborhood (Collision, 2010, October 8). This development raises some questions. Can a company actually establish common space? Despite being within an urban setting, such a garden has the same governance as a suburban strip mall. A privately-administered garden may offer opportunities for communion, but will it offer unrestricted communion? That is, can visitors do anything that would be legal within a public park? This might be tested if residents decide the park would be a good spot to protest the policies of governments or businesses.

Security

The connection between crime and urban areas is a difficult exigence for urban renewal advocates. They must demonstrate that the city, or at least their portion of it, is actually safe. As mentioned above, the suburbs have recently created mixed use developments that are extricated from any existing urban grid to offer an urban feel in a safer suburban environment. The Crossroads, by contrast, is within Kansas City's urban core. It is situated near Kansas City's east side, which experiences higher crime rates than the west side.

Condominiums in the Crossroads deal with this by emphasizing their private security efforts, implying that public safety efforts are not sufficient. For example, the Piper Lofts offer residents the option (presumably at a premium) of "[p]rivate enclosed parking and garage parking." However, all Piper Lofts residents would benefit from the "[p]rivate residential entry with coded access" (Piper Lofts Features, n.d.). The Freighthouse Lofts promises its residents a "[s]ecured telephone entry system, six accessible security video feeds and 24 hour courtesy patrol service" (Amenities).

Cities may also deal with the issue by providing well-lit streets and a police presence. But this raises issues related to resource allocation. What is the criterion for determining policing? Well, the crime level seems to be a reasonable answer. Though the Crossroads is not immune to crime, it does not suffer the same rates as Kansas City's eastside neighborhoods. For example, the *Kansas City Star* has dubbed one eastside neighborhood the "murder factory" (Williams, 2010, May 12). It seems reasonable that such high crime neighborhoods receive more attention from the police. What counterargument could residents of the Crossroads possibly make? It would be hard to make such a case without invoking class and possibly issues

of race. One option the Crossroads has pursued is to establish a Community Improvement District, which would afford it services beyond those enjoyed by other neighborhoods.

The Community Improvement District, which the Crossroads Community Association began to pursue in 2010, is an initiative that would be focused on increasing safety at night. The president of the association stated that, “We need support at night in Crossroads.... Not that it’s dangerous, but properties get damaged at night, and there are car break-ins and stolen bicycles” (Collison, 2010, November 9). The initiative was being designed with the help of the Downtown Council. The president /CEO of that association said of the Crossroads, “It’s a vibrant cultural community with retail, restaurants and galleries and a large number of visitors.... We need to ensure the neighborhood looks as good as it can and make it as clean and safe as it can be” (ibid.).

The Community Improvement District is analogous to the suburban HOA. The HOA collects dues from homeowners, whereas CID collects revenue through taxes. That the CID is seeking benefits beyond those of other neighborhoods leads to two important implications. First, it means that the neighborhood is receiving better services than less fortunate neighborhoods. The Community Improvement District would provide aesthetic improvements (e.g. sidewalk upgrades) and enhanced security. Even if this does not mean more police, increased surveillance could reduce crime. The second implication of urban CIDs is related to the private nature of security forces. What type of training will CID security guards receive? To what extent will they enforce the law, as opposed to neighborhood rules? A hypothetical example may be in order here. CID security may be instructed to limit individuals’ free speech on public property. This may seem far-fetched, but a similar situation occurred to the north of the Crossroads. In the Power & Light District, private security prevented a business person from distributing handbills

on a public street. By establishing a CID, then urban neighborhoods like the Crossroads are able to take a page from the suburban playbook. By paying dues (i.e., taxes in the case of the CID), constituents of the neighborhood are able to enjoy better services than nearby neighborhoods.

The Crossroads has also benefitted from an enclosure effect, in that it is somewhat detached from poorer nonwhite neighborhoods. As mentioned earlier, this is partially achieved through the construction of highways. The enclosure effect has also been achieved through pedestrian and mass transit infrastructure. As mentioned earlier, Kansas City has introduced express bus lines. These are referred to as MAX lines by the Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA). The first line implemented, the Main Street MAX, connected Kansas City's most affluent urban neighborhoods: The River Market, Central Business District, Crossroads Arts District, Crown Center, Westport, Country Club Plaza, Brookside and Waldo. These are all predominantly white and relatively affluent neighborhoods. That is to say, these are neighborhoods where people have more access to personal automobiles. Yet it was this affluent corridor that would first receive an express bus system. (Later, a second Troost Max line would be introduced that would come closer to serving the city's east side.) Residents of the Crossroads could now more easily travel to other hip urban neighborhoods. The MAX line integrated all of Kansas City's front regions. Meanwhile, the back regions, where transit-dependent residents actually lived, would be stuck with the same bus system. The city could have built a system that linked the front and back regions, but this would have compromised the ontological security of people of the Crossroads (along with other upscale Kansas City neighborhoods).

Implications

In the modern metropolis, the authority of central anchor cities has been compromised. In order to revitalize its urban core, Kansas City has realized that it must embrace its urban nature. To populate a neighborhood like the Crossroads, it must appear more urban, even as artifacts of suburbia linger in the background. Furthermore, the city must repopulate its neighborhoods with the right sort of middle class residents. The period of constructing high-rise public housing projects has ended. Within the neo-liberal occupational psychosis, the city should be a marketable environment. This evolution was evident in the Crossroads, where Kansas City used a variety of tax incentives to lure residents and businesses to the neighborhood. However, these incentives required developers to help implement its dreams of creating a vibrant urban neighborhood.

Even as urban neighborhoods trade on their space-like qualities, they also emphasize infrastructure and security measures meant to create a stable place. Residents may love the notion of walking to dinner or an art gallery, but the fear of being mugged lurks in the backs of their minds. Interventions, such as private security forces, might assuage these fears. The interplay between space and place creates neighborhoods that are novel, but not entirely foreign. This urban evolution will bring with it myriad implications. The first set of implications relates to the experience of individuals within a rehabilitated urban place. The second set of implications relates to how the place-making practices of municipalities might affect other parts of the city.

In order for urban neighborhoods to be successful in the long run, inhabitants must experience an ontological change. Living in the city must be the preferred existence of many people, rather than merely a brief phase. To achieve this, cities must maximize their natural

advantage of multi-modal agency. However, this will be difficult in cities like Kansas City, which lack mass transit and vibrant urban neighborhoods. These cities may find themselves arguing for the virtues of an urban environment that has not yet emerged. It is hard to promote a car-free lifestyle when neighborhoods lack transit options and/or basic services. In the Crossroads there are many boutique shops and restaurants, but the neighborhood is lacking in the type of stores that sustain everyday life – grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores, etc. (Retail). In this context, residents are not able to transcend automobility. In fact, they find themselves dependent on automobiles in an environment that is not conducive to automobility. To get around this problem, cities may seek creative ways to introduce transit options, such as partnering with private companies. Private companies could provide shuttles, car-sharing and bicycle-sharing within urban environments. Of course, these services will likely cost more than subsidized public transit options. In addition, such private transit is not subject to democratic control. This leads to the second implication – the complications that arise when cities partner with private entities.

As mentioned above, a private company has established a “community garden” in the Crossroads. Though this garden may be *open* to the public, that does not explain what rights the public has while inhabiting the park. There is a notable difference between access and freedom of expression, or what de Certeau calls enunciation. For example, can the park be used to stage a protest? If the owner wishes to use the park for a company barbecue, will he be required to notify the public beforehand, or even ask their permission? Will the public have any say in how such a place is used? Similar issues might arise with the aforementioned private transit. What is to stop a private operator from discontinuing a route without notice? Perhaps the market could no longer justify a route, even though many people depended on it. Public parks and transit

serve citizens, whereas private spaces and transit serve customers. The former is subject to democratic recourse, while the latter is ruled by the logic of the market. While urban renewal can be a rough process for gentrified neighborhoods, its effects extend beyond neighborhood boundaries.

The taxes collected by cities are intended to benefit the public, not portions of the public. Otherwise cities develop in an uneven manner, which Kevin Fox Gotham (2002) contends has been the case for Kansas City. Gotham demonstrates how this practice has been detrimental to Kansas City's eastside. This uneven development could be perpetuated by private organizations that provide services commonly associated with municipal governments. For example, a Community Improvement District could tax its businesses in order to provide security and infrastructure improvements. Such a mechanism would work in affluent areas, where customers might not mind a slight increase in sales tax. In less affluent areas, businesses might be hesitant to increase taxes. Hence, the CID is a quasi-governmental intervention that is focused on stabilizing places. It allows certain neighborhoods to enclose themselves from less stable nearby spaces. Enclosure has also been achieved as a direct result of governmental actions.

Kansas City has attempted to offer more efficient mass transit within its urban core. A recent achievement has been the express bus service, called the MAX. The city's first MAX line was a north-south route that connected the relatively affluent neighborhoods of the Country Club Plaza, Westport, Crossroads Arts District, and the River Market. These neighborhoods were relatively well-educated and affluent when compared to the city's east side (Mapping America: Every City, Every Block, n.d.). That is, the city's first express bus served a population that was not likely to need it. If the goal of public transit was social mobility, then the MAX failed miserably. If the MAX had been focused on social mobility, then it would have connected

impoverished individuals with places of employment and education. However, the MAX does succeed at creating a mode of public transit that serves the gentry alone. It is a bus route that does not visit the back regions of Kansas City.

Kansas City has strived to improve its urban infrastructure in a variety of ways. In the neoliberal occupational psychosis, this has meant accommodating desirable middle class residents. As the city has worked to develop a place that will foster an urban ontology, it has simultaneously perpetuated the sort of uneven development that has historically plagued the city.

Chapter Four:

Government Resources and the Rhetoric of Economic Correctness

Introduction to Chapter

Despite renewed interest in urban living, cities still faced difficulties at the start of the 21st century. Developers, who viewed urban development as risky, often asked for public assistance before pursuing projects in inner-cities. In many cases, cities complied and offered various incentives to private developers. This has further complicated a longstanding debate about the appropriate role of government. The debate over the role of government is often reduced to a quarrel between liberals and conservatives. Conventional wisdom dictates that liberals wish to increase the size of government, while conservatives wish to stunt its growth. To put it lightly, this interpretation lacks nuance. It would be more accurate to describe the debate as involving two strains of liberalism. Those who wish to reduce the size of government turn to the principles of classical liberalism. By contrast, others see liberalism as an evolving concept that must change with society. For those of the latter view, one of the biggest changes has been the shift from a rural to urban society.

Thomas Paine, a prominent figure in early liberalism, foreshadowed the philosophy's evolution in his pamphlet *Agrarian Justice* (1797). There Paine suggested that landowners had a responsibility to pay a property tax that could be redistributed into the larger society. As the 1800s saw American cities swell with migrants and European immigrants, liberalism began to take a social turn. Rather than focusing on the singular landowner, liberal thought began to focus on the masses within the cities. This social turn is what David Harvey (2005) calls "embedded liberalism" and what Jason Hackworth (2007) calls "egalitarian liberalism." This approach would catch on during the progressive era of the twentieth century.

In the progressive era, the government actively tried to spread liberty through large-scale interventions, such as the New Deal and the Great Society. Ironically, the government also did much to spread inequality during this time period. This was evident in how the government addressed issues of urban housing. The FHA secured loans for suburban housing, while HUD supplied subsidized housing within urban areas. These practices created a “racialized space” (Gotham, 2002) that interpellated whites as suburban and blacks as urban. The practices of redlining, which originated with the FHA (Jackson, 1985), and blockbusting hastened the decline of urban cores throughout the U.S. In addition to racial segregation, this also led to income segregation. Middle class whites exited the cities, while racist mortgage practices prevented many blacks from gaining wealth (Jackson, 1985; Gotham, 2002). To remedy urban decline in the twentieth century, many cities pursued urban renewal projects that often displaced poor residents. These early urban renewal attempts were often focused on suburbanizing the city with highways, shopping centers, arenas and office buildings. These interventions were focused on making the city a destination, rather than a holistic urban space (Hackworth, 2007).

Despite early urban renewal attempts, U.S. urban cores continued to be in decline. As Hannigan (1998) notes, municipal governments stuck to planning destinations for suburban visitors rather than mixed-use neighborhoods. Residences did not play a large part in such urban renewal schemes, as the city was no longer an acceptable habitat for the white middle class. While creating destinations for suburbanities, cities were at a clear disadvantage. Cities were competing against the suburbs where prospective visitors already lived. In addition to residents, these suburbs also offered open spaces and fewer regulations. To even the playing field, cities often offered an array of economic incentives to developers. Two frequently used incentives are property tax abatements and tax-increment financing (TIF). A tax-abatement means the city is

not receiving property tax revenue, or a reduced amount, for a set period of time. TIF means the city is providing initial funding for a private sector project. Since cities do not typically have robust savings, they have been forced to issue bonds that will be paid back through taxes generated by TIF-funded projects. In both cases, new development does not immediately translate into new tax revenue. A city might also offer an employer economic incentives to relocate to a “blighted” area. Sometimes employers even receive incentives to simply stay in the city, rather than moving to another municipality.

It should be noted that cities are not simply handing out incentives to companies without expecting anything in return. First, cities often attach strings to incentive packages. For instance, a developer may be required to make improvements beyond what is prescribed by city code. Second, and more important, cities expect that after the incentive period the developments will be stable and no longer require public assistance. In fact, cities are betting that these incentivized properties will eventually be sources of tax revenue. This approach to urban renewal is necessarily myopic as it situates “economic growth” above all other considerations, such as the public good. This exemplifies what Aune (2001) has labeled “the rhetoric of economic correctness.”

Aune traces the “rhetoric of economic correctness” back to Ronald Reagan, libertarians and Ayn Rand’s cult of personality. These factors have created a rhetorical climate where economics is privileged over all other concerns. For cities, this has greatly limited their topoi. Anytime a city spends revenue, it must now have an economic justification. This is reinforced by bond-rating agencies, which will downgrade governments that do not act appropriately (Hackworth, 2007). Indeed, within the neoliberal occupational psychosis economic growth has become a God term in American society that can justify many actions. In contrast, government

has become a Devil term. We strive for economic prosperity, but we *know* that even well-meaning governments are wasteful. It is this sort of apparent realism that Aune (2001) believes is at the heart of the rhetoric of economic correctness. City governments must avoid their perceived natural inclination to spend taxpayer money *frivolously*. This was exemplified by the debate over tax incentives that unfolded in the Crossroads Arts District.

In the early twenty-first century the artists who founded the Crossroads Arts District had many new neighbors. Many of these new businesses and residents had received tax breaks when they relocated to the neighborhood. The new arrivals led to a gentrification of the neighborhood, which raised property values and subsequently property taxes. This was not a major concern for the newcomers who were receiving property tax abatements. Meanwhile, the original artists saw their property tax bills increase significantly. Artists and their supporters cried foul and asked for similar incentives. In making this request, artists faced the difficulty of finding an argument that would justify incentivizing artists and art within the neoliberal occupational psychosis. As I will demonstrate below, the inherent value of art was not sufficient. Instead, artists needed to transform themselves into agents of economic productivity.

Thanks in part to Richard Florida's creative class rhetoric, artists could situate themselves within the neoliberal occupational psychosis. Through the rhetoric of economic correctness (employed by artists and their supporters), the city was eventually convinced that artists deserved economic incentives. That is, artists were not just rent-seeking parasites. However, this was not the case for all urban residents, such as the Hispanic and African-American residents who lived near the Crossroads Arts District. The neo-liberal occupational psychosis did not readily present such rhetorical opportunities for these Kansas Citians.

In this chapter I will first explain the theoretical underpinnings of my analysis. I am specifically concerned with how the rhetoric of economic correctness factored into the debate over tax incentives. This type of rhetoric capitalizes on a realistic style (Hariman, 1995) and quasi-logical arguments (Perelman, 1982). After laying out the theoretical basis, I will contextualize Kansas City's recent urban renewal efforts. The city was surprised by the demand for urban housing in its downtown. However, it soon found ways to attract developers to the neighborhood. These developers sought incentives through the rhetoric of economic correctness. I will next consider the rhetoric of Crossroads artists and their supporters. Though the artists provided the neighborhood's ethos, they faced skyrocketing property tax bills. To remedy this, artists and their supporters slowly gravitated toward the rhetoric of economic correctness. Finally, I will examine growing dissatisfaction with the city's incentive practices. Former Mayor Mark Funkhouser and an outside group opened a post-realist space where the wisdom of the incentive practices could be questioned.

Theory

As in previous chapters, I am interested here in the constitutive nature of rhetoric. In this chapter my concern is how some urban residents are interpellated as agents of economic productivity, while others are interpellated as "rent-seekers." The former are a good long-term investment, while the latter are mere parasites. This constitution is dependent upon the rhetoric of economic correctness, specifically the realistic style and quasi-logical arguments. Before exploring these theories, it is first necessary to understand that neo-liberalism only pays lip service to its *laissez-faire* ideal. Such an ideal is held out as a justification to explain away other possible uses of public resources. However, there is a rationality that determines when *laissez-*

faire treatment is appropriate. Such rationality has been evident in Kansas City's incentive practices.

Like other cities, Kansas City has transformed itself into a facilitator of economic development. In doing so, the city has adopted an interventionist rather than laissez-faire approach. However, it is intervening on behalf of "economic development." The logic here is that helping private interests today will generate public revenues in the future. This sort of intervention seems to violate the fundamental beliefs of neoliberalism, as government is not getting out of the way. In fact, government is picking winners and losers. Purcell (2009) addresses this inconsistency in a 2009 article in the journal *Planning Theory*. There he introduces the term "aidez-faire," which translates to "help do" rather than "let do." He explains that,

Aidez-faire state intervention includes, for example, public investment in efficient infrastructure, the transfer of publicly created technology to the private sector, monetarist policies to control inflation, *public investment in private land development*, workfare policies to discipline the unemployed and reintegrate them into the labor market, and the increasing dominance of exchange value as the primary way to value urban land. (my italics p. 142)

Under this aidez-faire reality, governments establish partnerships with private entities. Harvey (2005) notes the importance of these "public-private partnerships" within neoliberalism. In the meantime, those actors who fall outside of the neoliberal occupational psychosis receive laissez-faire treatment.

In the aidez-faire reality, it makes more sense for cities to incentivize shopping centers than to fund programs for the needy. To explain this phenomenon, I turn to Aune's (2001)

treatment of the relationship between economics and rhetoric. Aune is specifically interested in how extreme free-market policies are promoted. He argues that free-market rhetoric relies on economic topoi and a “realist” style. Aune lists six strategies linked to economic correctness, but two are relevant to the rhetoric of urban renewal. One strategy, is to “[d]efine any object, person, or relationship as a commodity that can be bought or sold.” For example, even public spaces can be indirectly commodified. In this view, sidewalks and public parks are investments that will pay off when they attract tax-paying residents. The second relevant strategy is to “[r]ely heavily on quasi-logical and quasi-statistical argument to enhance credibility and a sense of disinterested objectivity” (p. 36). The latter draws from Perelman’s discussion of quasi-logical arguments. This is evident in applications for tax incentives, which are buttressed by the analyses of hired experts.

Aune contends that these strategies are coupled with a “realist style,” a term he borrows from Robert Hariman. Hariman (1995) traced the realist style back to Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, which depended upon a dichotomy between the idealist and the realist. Machiavelli identified himself as a realist, while his opponents were concerned with how things should be. Hariman points to contemporary examples of the realist style like Henry Kissinger and George H.W. Bush. About these recent instances Hariman states, “[i]n every case, the speaker gives us a real world by contrasting it to a textual world and denigrates opposing perspectives by associating them with their means of expression” (pp. 29-30). Aune (2001) further explains that the realist style is “... pleased with itself for ‘seeing through’ the pretensions of poets, dreamers, and romantics” (p. 40). Hence, the realist style depends on the rhetor appearing to deliver the harsh truth. At this point, one might still wonder how building sports arenas could fall under the realist style. Remember, though, that the rhetoric of economic correctness relies on opportunity to

commodify virtually everything. If urban land is treated as a commodity, then what goes there will affect the value of the commodity. In this context, future economic growth projections are based on how the commodity is valued. Hackworth (2007) and Hannigan (1998) have demonstrated how cities have justified funding a variety of private projects based on the promise of future economic prosperity. There is a simple quasi-logical argument at play here:

Major premise: Cities should provide assistance for developments that result in economic growth.

Minor premise: Sports arenas, tourist attractions and upscale condominium projects will result in economic growth.

Conclusion: Cities should provide assistance for sports arenas, tourist attractions and upscale condominiums.

I use Perelman's (1982) term "quasi-logical" here because many of the terms remain undefined and uncontested. For example, what is meant by economic growth and why is it sacrosanct? The argument appears logical, even though many parts of it are open to scrutiny. This sort of argument depends on the audience's unwillingness or inability to scrutinize the premises.

Perelman (1982) states that,

[i]n order to transform an argument into a rigorous demonstration, a person would have to define all the terms used, eliminate all ambiguity, and remove from the argument the possibility of multiple interpretations. Thus, although every nonspecialist will be struck by the logical appearance of quasi-logical arguments, the specialist in formal logic will immediately spot everything that differentiates such arguments from rigorous deduction.

(p. 53)

Of course, most people are not logicians, nor do they have the time to investigate the rigor of an argument. Under this quasi-logic, using taxpayer money to fund a stadium is not a frivolous endeavor. However, something that could not lead to economic prosperity would be unjustified. In the present case, this seems applicable to artists. Though they did not originally want government assistance, the artists of the Crossroads had no choice under the present aidez-faire system. In order to plead for assistance, they had two rhetorical options. First, they could have devised a new syllogism, such as:

Major premise: Cities should provide assistance for endeavors that improve the overall quality of life.

Minor premise: Artists improve overall quality of life.

Conclusion: Kansas City should provide assistance to the artists of the Crossroads Arts District.

The challenge here would have been forwarding a new major premise that is not linked to economic growth. As Aune explains, this might be viewed as “rent-seeking” behavior. He explains, “[t]he theory of rent-seeking has contributed to the widespread perception that government is incapable of solving social problems. Any oppressed group can now be labeled as rent-seeking rather than as seeking ‘justice’” (p. 46). Before a group can receive public funds, it must first demonstrate that it will play a part in increasing the total amount of public funds available. Ultimately, the artists were compelled to work within the major premise of the neoliberal occupational psychosis. That is, the artists and their supporters argued that their activities were related to economic growth. To understand how this came to pass, it is necessary to consider the evolution of urban renewal in Kansas City. I will begin by examining the city’s

quest for a large-scale project. I will then consider the rhetorical aspects of economic incentives utilized in the Crossroads Arts District.

Searching for the Big Project

Kansas City has spent considerable time searching for a project that would signal the revitalization of its downtown. For the most part, it sought projects that would attract visitors to downtown. As such, the city was not terribly concerned with bringing new residents into its downtown. This changed when it became obvious that there was substantial interest in downtown housing.

In 2006 the city published *The Urban Renewal Business Report* which detailed how \$4.5 billion had been invested in downtown. On the list of redevelopment projects, “Residential Properties” ranked second, with \$745 million of investment. However, this is the only category that is not subdivided by specific properties. The \$750 million spent on residential properties was surpassed by the \$850 million spent on a single entertainment district called the KC *Live!* Entertainment District (italics in original). The investment is even larger when coupled with the \$276 million investment in the Sprint Center arena, which sits across the street. Viewed together, this single area (also referred to as the Power & Light District) represents over \$1.1 billion – nearly one-fourth of all investment in downtown (Garrison, 2006).

The city’s massive investment in a relatively small entertainment district sent a message about its priorities. As the twenty-first century began, the city continued to focus on building destinations rather than neighborhoods. The Power & Light District was a well-planned and heavily-incentivized area intended to rehabilitate downtown by attracting visitors from around the region. While some of the neighborhood bars might have regular customers, the district was designed for transient visitors. This is in stark contrast to the Crossroads, a mixed-use

neighborhood that developed organically before receiving incentives. Though Kansas City initially neglected residential development and continued to emphasize destination attractions, it would eventually become a major part of its urban renewal vision.

Residential development was highlighted in the citizen-generated 1998 *FOCUS* report, which was later cited by those seeking tax incentives in the Crossroads. The *FOCUS* report saw the nascent arts district as a key element of redeveloping downtown. The report stated that, “[t]he Crossroads provides one of the best opportunities in the urban core to create a true mixed-use living environment in which a variety of businesses can thrive with higher density housing scattered throughout” (p. 86). Despite the suggestion, Kansas City did not expect residential development to play a large part in downtown’s rebirth. The city makes it clear in the *The Urban Renewal Business Report* that it was caught off-guard by residential demand. Its first reference to residential development alludes to the Crossroads, along with the River Market neighborhood. The report explains how the city sought large projects, “[y]et success on a smaller scale had already occurred in the nearby River Market area, an historic section between the Downtown loop and the Missouri River. As in an ‘artist loft’ enclave to the south, a healthy grassroots market with surprisingly strong local demand drove this early development.” (p. 6). Quite frankly, Kansas City had not considered residential rebirth a possibility for its downtown. It made more sense to transform the downtown into an environment that would accommodate daytime office workers, tourists and conventioners. That is, the city wanted its downtown to be a great destination and not a neighborhood. However, the city was eventually compelled to embrace residential development in its downtown. In *The Urban Renewal Business Report* the city admits that it was shocked that people wanted to move downtown. The report specifically states, “[s]omewhat surprisingly ... the first component of this recovery was residential growth

that nearly doubled the population of greater Downtown between 1996 and 2006” (p. 4). Later, then-Mayor Kay Barnes began to push residential development throughout Kansas City’s urban core. This policy shift ushered in a period of tax incentives for residential development, with many occurring in the Crossroads Arts District. I turn now to a consideration of how the city forged these public-private partnerships with developers.

The Public-Private Partnership

Like other municipalities, Kansas City uses an arcane vernacular to describe the array of incentives it offers to developers. At first, this might seem like a bureaucratic nightmare. However, the extensive nomenclature exists to facilitate development rather than regulate it. Applicants may feel as though they are “jumping through hoops,” but the result is to their benefit. These incentives exemplify the aidez-faire aspect of municipal government.

In the 2006 report, City Manager Wayne Cauthen explains “[w]hat the city did was use historic tax credits, tax abatements and other incentives to turn these properties over from Class B office space into condo living and loft living It was an aggressive effort to make that work” (pp. 4, 6). Indeed the report includes an entire section titled “Public/Private Teamwork.” There former mayor Kay Barnes explains that “[o]ne of the reasons for our success is that the public and private sectors are working closely together.” Barnes also expresses her appreciation for corporate leaders who “are willing to take risks and think outside of the box” (p. 4). In its weakened state, Kansas City needed to forge these partnerships to rehabilitate its downtown.

Though *The Urban Renewal Business Report* heaps considerable praise upon businesses that invested in downtown, the public-private partnership was not the result of altruism. Rather, private entities took advantage of public resources made available to them in the form of tax-increment financing (TIF) and property tax-abatements. As explained earlier, TIF is a

speculative mechanism that bets on future prosperity. Cities borrow money not to immediately serve the public good, but to build shopping centers, arenas, office buildings, etc. Sales tax revenue collected in a TIF district, such as the Crossroads Arts District, is used to pay off money that has been borrowed. The hope is that the neighborhoods will eventually be stable sources of sales tax revenue. In the case of property tax-abatements, certain properties are tax-exempt or tax-reduced for a set period of time. Again, cities hope they will eventually be stable sources of property tax revenue.

After glancing at tax-incentive applications, one might find them to be extremely technical. For example, the attachments often include analyses by well-credentialed experts. However, this technical appearance masks the rhetorical nature of the tax-incentive applications. These seemingly mundane documents not only rely on a quasi-logical format to create the appearance of reality. However, the authors also resort to emotional appeals, specifically fear appeals and appeals to authority.

The tax-incentive applications purport to show the reality of urban development in Kansas City. To assume this privileged position, the applicants draw upon the analyses of well-credentialed experts. This is used to establish both the problem (i.e., past and present economic decay) and the solution (future economic prosperity). These formulas are consistent with the quasi-logical approach (Perelman 1982) of the rhetoric of economic correctness (Aune, 2001). A commission whose members are appointed by the city first reviews these incentive proposals. The commission then sends its recommendations to the city council for final approval. In both cases, the decision makers are not required to have any education that would help them understand the analysis. These calculations provide the veneer of positivist rigor, even though they buttress rhetorical appeals.

The economic analysis is used to establish what is called the “but for TIF” clause. In this section, the applicants argue that without incentives the neighborhood would be largely immune to economic development. The “but for TIF” section is meant to shed light on harsh reality, but it actually functions as a fear appeal. This fear appeal was evident in the 19th and Central TIF proposal. The proposal was submitted in 1999, but amended in 2000, 2004 and 2006. The initial application was 281 pages long, and included many attachments that offered projections on topics such as how the project would increase the city’s economic base and how it would create jobs. The “but for TIF” section of this document is a brief paragraph that alludes to these calculations to demonstrate the possibility of increased revenue after receiving incentives. In this paragraph, the applicant confidently states that, “[b]ecause of the existing condition and age of the properties within the Redevelopment Area, the area on the whole has not been subject to growth or development in the past and cannot reasonably be anticipated to be developed without the adoption of tax increment financing” (p. 10). Despite presenting this harsh reality, the applicant inserts a clever metaphor into the very next sentence: “[t]he cost of curing the existing conditions and the construction of the improvements contemplated by the Plan is not economically viable, if fully borne by the developer” (p. 10). This simple sentence positions the neighborhood as ailing and in need of a cure. The paragraph then demonstrates how, based on the attached calculations, the “rates of return” would possibly improve, before concluding “[t]he use of Tax Increment Financing makes the Plan feasible and thus attractive to private investment” (p. 10). The confidence of the applicant here is notable, as she claims to share a slice of reality. However, before this section the applicant primes the reader with an enthymematic fear appeal.

The fear appeal first surfaces on page five of the application, under the heading of “Redevelopment Plan Objectives.” There the applicant asserts that its development would “enhance the tax base of the City and the other Taxing Districts by developing the Redevelopment Area to its highest and best use, encouraging private investment in the surrounding area increasing employment opportunities” (p. 5). After painting that rosy picture of the future, the applicant suggests what might happen if the city does not approve the TIF proposal. The applicant suggests the development would “discourage commerce, industry and manufacturing from moving their operations to another state” (p. 5). This is not only a fear appeal, but is enthymematic in its use of the phrase “another state.” The applicant could have simply said, “another city,” as the Kansas City metropolitan area contains many cities in both Missouri and Kansas. It is also feasible that employers could be poached by other metropolitan areas. But Kansas City was not concerned about competition from nearby Independence, Missouri or Lee’s Summit, Missouri. Nor was it most worried about cross-state rival St. Louis stealing its companies. What concerned Kansas City was its Kansas suburbs, particularly those in Johnson County.

Johnson County is replete with suburban office parks, mostly within the city of Overland Park. Overland Park’s College Boulevard corridor represents what Garreau calls an “edge city.” Countless office buildings are surrounded by seas of asphalt. Office parks have names that juxtapose neoliberal culture and idyllic pastoral images, such as “Corporate Woods” and “Executive Hills.” It is far from an urban planning achievement. In fact, the Urban Land Institute has cited it as an exemplar of poor urban planning (Booth, Leonard & Pawlukiewicz, n.d.). Yet in some cases it has successfully attracted companies away from Kansas City’s urban core. The cross-border business poaching was profiled in the *New York Times* in 2011. The

article noted that, “Leaders in some Midwestern border cities like Omaha, Sioux City and Fargo insist that they have found ways to work together. But the battle over jobs continues with particular intensity in Kansas City, where decades of rapid growth have transformed the Kansas suburbs into successful economic rivals of the Missouri downtown” (Sulzberger, 2011, April 8). This intra-metropolitan poaching has an interesting effect on a major premise of neoliberalism: Cities should provide assistance for developments that result in economic growth. If there is always another nearby municipality willing to offer incentives, then the future period of economic prosperity and stability might never happen. Indeed, more than a decade after this incentive package, and many other subsequent packages, Kansas continued to successfully pursue Missouri companies. The *New York Times* article states that, “[o]f the 53 companies that have received state tax incentives to move into Kansas since the 2009 fiscal year, 45 have been from Missouri, according to a spokesman for the Kansas Department of Commerce. During that period, just one company moved from Kansas to Missouri, according to Missouri figures” (Sulzberger, 2011, April 8). In this context, Kansas and Missouri saw things quite differently. A Kansas state senator believed that these incentives were actually “just an inherent aspect of the free market” (ibid.). In contrast, the head of Kansas City’s Economic Development corporation used a war metaphor: “Is the state of Kansas going to unilaterally disarm, and until that happens why would Missouri unilaterally disarm” (ibid.). Even though some in Kansas City recognized the futility of the system, they felt resigned to play the incentive game. It was this context that allowed, and continues to allow, developers to argue that incentives are necessary. In addition to capitalizing on this fear appeal, developers have also used existing municipal reports to buttress their claims.

TIF applicants have also utilized appeals to authority by citing “plans” developed by the city itself. These plans, such as the citizen-generated FOCUS Plan, offered development principles. This allowed developers to make *principled* arguments, based on premises the city had already accepted. In the 19th Terrace and Central “but for TIF” section it states, “[t]he best and most economically viable use for the property in the Redevelopment Area is mixed-use – residential, commercial, and light industrial – which contribute to the live-work environment envisioned in the Downtown Industrial Plan and in the FOCUS Plan” (p. 10). The West 17th Street TIF (2008, August 7) proposal package includes, as attachments, the city’s Old Film Row Design Guidelines and Crossroads Urban Design Guidelines. By citing these guidelines, the developers demonstrate their commitment to the city’s development goals.

The rhetorical use of these plans demonstrated the difference between regulation and facilitation. The city is in a weakened state. By offering TIF it is admitting that it cannot attract development without some sort of handout. As such, it cannot harshly regulate these businesses. Instead, the best it can do is set forth guidelines rather than regulations. If companies follow these guidelines, they can expect financial assistance. The city has little choice but to pursue this *aidez-faire* approach. It faces competition from a nearby suburban community that comes to the table with advantages. Johnson County benefits from the normative nature of suburbia. The county also has affluent residents who might prefer a short drive to a suburban office park. Finally, the county is also willing to dole out economic incentives.

As the city seized upon the neighborhood as an economic opportunity, the role of artists in the neighborhood became tenuous. The *aidez-faire* approach to urban redevelopment brought numerous residents and employers to the neighborhood. As stated in Chapter Two, the creative class began to take over the neighborhood. This change was about more than just identity, as

aidez-faire economics made it difficult for artists to afford to stay in the neighborhood. I turn now to a discussion of how artists and their supporters came to speak the rhetoric of economic correctness.

The City and Artists

As the city began to attract more development to the Crossroads, the role of the artists diminished. Neighborhood founder Jim Leedy had initially moved to the area to avoid gentrification. He had been previously gentrified out of a space in Kansas City's Westport neighborhood. This experience prompted him to purchase a vacant downtown building, instead of renting. Despite providing the initial spark for the neighborhood, artists like Leedy found themselves facing gentrification. As the value of neighboring buildings increased, Leedy and other Crossroads artists also saw their property values increase which brought higher property taxes. The situation was exacerbated by the lack of property taxes paid by his new neighbors, who were receiving aidez-faire tax breaks. For sake of economic redevelopment, the city had granted 25-year tax abatements to condominium purchasers. Even as these newcomers avoided paying taxes, their presence also resulted in higher property taxes for their non-incentivized neighbors. At the time, gallery owner Stephanie Leedy opined, "It's good to get the neighborhood going, but why do you keep giving tax abatements to new people coming in?" (Glassberg, 2005, November 29).

The gentrification of the Crossroads was covered in a *New York Times* article. The article notes that many artists have relocated to the West Bottoms neighborhood, because they cannot afford space in the Crossroads. Crossroads artist James Woodfill proclaimed that "[i]t's kind of a house of cards.... The Crossroads has based itself on young artists who live on shoestring budgets, but as rents and taxes rise, will that creative synergy move?" (Glassberg, 2005,

November 29). Woodfill himself was located in an area identified as the East Crossroads, adjacent to the original neighborhood. As the neighborhood gentrified, the East Crossroads, along with the separate West Bottoms neighborhood, attracted more artists.

The Dolphin Gallery, one of the district's first galleries, eventually moved to the West Bottoms neighborhood. This neighborhood of aging warehouses resembled the early days of the Crossroads. While describing his move to the East Crossroads, artist Stretch relied on a mix of rational argument and myth. Stretch first noted the importance of owning property, which could be later sold to developers. He insisted that if artists owned properties, "[t]hen we can't be run out once redevelopment starts. So when we decide to move, like I did, we can sell our building and make a profit" (Smith, 2004, June 26). He further justified this transient behavior as an inherent quality of artists. He opined that, "[y]ou can't keep artists in one spot; they are going to migrate. It's the nature of the beast. They are nomads" (Smith, 2004, June 26). There was considerable tension within this proclamation. On the one hand, Stretch insisted that artists should purchase properties and put down roots. However, they should also be ready to move when market forces are favorable. This was how bohemian ethos conformed to the neoliberal reality. Artists were pioneers discovering the frontier, but they were also investors.

Stretch, a trained sculptor, had a thorough understanding of the neoliberal context. He could not merely do his art. In addition to owning property, Stretch also opened a popular restaurant in the Crossroads. The restaurant, called Grinders, would be featured on a national cable television program ("Grinders," n.d.). In 2011 Stretch was also in negotiations to host his own national cable television program on the male-centered Spike network (Kendall, 2011). In 2009, Kansas City Mayor Mark Funkhouser nominated him to the city's TIF commission. This position would give him a say in how tax incentives were awarded. By relationship, it would

also give Crossroads artists a say in the process. Stretch's appointment to the commission was no simple process. When first proposed, a city councilwoman demanded justification for Stretch's appointment. Funkhouser offered a passionate defense, but minimized Stretch's role as an artist. In fact, Funkhouser admitted that he did not fully understand Stretch's sculptures. However, he was quick to point out that local corporate behemoth H&R Block displayed one of these structures. More important, he insisted that Stretch was an "entrepreneur" and a "businessman." After this debate, the vote on Stretch's appointment was delayed (Kansas City Council Record, 2009, September 3). At the next city council meeting a council member attempted to send the appointment back to committee, but the move was defeated (Kansas City Council Record, 2009, September 10). One week later the council approved Stretch's appointment by a vote of 8-4 (Kansas City Council Record, 2009, September 17). Though Stretch was appointed to the commission, it is notable that the arts community would be represented by one of their most entrepreneurial members. This is not to suggest that Stretch did not deserve the appointment. It is simply striking that his identity as an artist was not sufficient. After all, a good deal of tax incentives were being awarded in the city's premier arts district. Perhaps the city could use an artist to identify what projects would best fit the character of the neighborhood? By privileging Stretch's business identity, the message was clear. Tax incentives are awarded based on economic criteria, while all other concerns are pushed into the background.

While some Crossroads artists left the neighborhood, its founder Jim Leedy decided to fight his increased property tax bills. His decision could have been due to multiple factors. Leedy had already started over when he founded the Crossroads. He was also of advanced age, which may have made a big move less attractive. However, the most apparent factor was related

to justice. Leedy had taken a chance on the area in 1985. In the early twenty-first century other people were cashing in, while he was being pushed out. Eventually, Leedy and other Crossroads artists would be granted tax abatements. However, this only came after a prolonged rhetorical battle.

In order to receive incentives, Leedy could have argued that the neighborhood was a unique site where artists could experiment. However, Leedy was not able to rely solely on the intrinsic value of art, even though he believed Crossroads galleries like his served an important purpose for artists. Sure, the city had two established art galleries (i.e., Nelson Atkins Museum of Art and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art), but neither had the edginess of the Leedy-Voulikos Gallery. In 2001, Leedy explained that, "[t]he Kemper and the Nelson don't really deal with what is happening now. It has always been my concern to give opportunity to performance art, installation, things on the edge that are happening now" (Thorson, 2001, December 16). This statement not only reflected Leedy's belief in the intrinsic value of art, but it also lurks outside the neoliberal occupational psychosis. There are certainly contexts where playfulness and experimentation are revered. However, municipal economic development is not one of them. To receive a tax break, one must utilize what Aune calls the rhetoric of economic correctness. A writer for local alternative newspaper *The Pitch* described the situation in a 2007 opinion piece:

It's great that so many old buildings in Kansas City have found second lives as wine shops and lofts. But the lack of thought and discipline that went into making it happen is sickening. City officials let developers and their lawyers pile their plates at the incentive buffet, and now somebody has to pay the bill. That somebody is turning out to be the people who did the real work in the Crossroads. The people who built the neighborhood

— one art installation, one bowl of chili and one carnival supply at a time — are getting killed while the investors who can afford lawyers fluent in tax-break acronyms (TIF, PILOTs, EATs) cash in. (Martin, 2007).

The plea here is simple. Artists did the hard work of establishing the neighborhood, but they are suffering because they do not know the language. The writer here is merely pointing out the inequity of the system. However, appeals for justice can easily be dismissed as rent-seeking behavior (Aune, 2001). In the mainstream *Kansas City Star*, writers seemed to understand this problem as they began to situate artists within the neoliberal occupational psychosis. These writers largely ignored the value of art, instead relying on the artists' role in developing the Crossroads Arts District. Eventually Leedy would adopt a similar tact.

Kansas City Star columnist Thomas McClanahan first expressed praise for the neighborhood in 2000. With a touch of whimsy he explained that, “[i]t takes more than a casual visit to this area, which some call the Crossroads Arts District, to appreciate the spontaneous, broad-based revival that's occurring.” He ultimately remarks on the organic development of the district: “All this has been occurring without supervision or hand-holding by city bureaucrats.” (McClanahan 2000 January 18). In 2005, McClanahan expressed more praise “Well, the Crossroads District is the only one in the city that has transformed itself through the bottom-up process of spontaneous urban revival. Now the change is increasingly evident, as the virtuous cycle of revitalization spreads and the mix of uses broadens to include restaurants and lofts, along with the older uses of galleries, studios and light industrial businesses.” (McClanahan, 2005, May 3). In both of these passages, the artists of the Crossroads were placed in a libertarian frame. They were pursuing their passions, with no help from “city bureaucrats.” In the process, they created a vibrant neighborhood. At first glance, this seems to fit quite well within the neo-

liberal occupational psychosis. But keep in mind that laissez-faire is the ideal, while aidez-faire is the reality. Artists did receive the sort of laissez-faire treatment that would satisfy any Ayn Rand devotee. Meanwhile, developers received the aidez-faire treatment. When the two systems are allowed to co-exist, the result can only be inequity.

After receiving his property assessment and tax bill in 2004, Leedy was filled with righteous indignation. He also began to speak the rhetoric of economic correctness. He specifically stated that, “[i]f you force us out, you’re shooting yourself in the foot because artists are the ones drawing people to the area” (Collison, 2004, January 6). Leedy seemed to accept that the intrinsic value of art would not earn him any concessions. The neoliberal occupational psychosis did not allow for such a premise. Instead, he needed to work with the existing major premise: “businesses that will lead to future economic growth deserve incentives.” As such, Leedy and his supporters began to repackage artists as agents of economic development. This was reflected in statements by Crossroads real estate developer Suzy Aron. In 2005 she argued that, “[b]ecause they’ve (artists) created this great environment, they should be rewarded. We see the artist as a developer” (Eder, 2005, June 22). By rhetorically transforming artists into real estate developers, the artists gained agency.

In 2006, the city’s Planned Industrial Expansion Authority (PIEA) authorized a study of a tax-abatement for artists in the Crossroads. At the time, the committee’s executive director offered a justification based on the extrinsic economic value of artists. “Once you start gentrifying an area, it drives up prices, so it becomes unaffordable for folks who made the area different. The underlying theme behind this is to keep this place affordable for the artists and craftspeople to stay there” (Collison, 2006, August 8). At first glance, this may seem like a defense of art, but the PIEA awards the abatements, which is decidedly not an arts commission.

Its mission, as described on its Web site, is quite simple: “[t]he PIEA was formed to foster commercial and industrial development in specifically designated redevelopment areas” (Planned Industrial Expansion Authority, n.d.). To do anything but encourage future development would be malfeasance.

By 2007, property values and property taxes in the district had again increased drastically, but the PIEA had not yet determined whether artists should receive any sort of incentives. As decision time grew near, a business columnist for the *Kansas City Star* made the economic case for arts-related tax abatements. He insisted that, “artists and the like have always served as the bird dogs of redevelopment. They tend to scope out the next cheapest cool area and pioneer the neighborhood. The development crowd soon follows, driving up prices and pushing the pioneers out” (Lester, May 22, 2007). Here the columnist gave artists agency within neoliberal frame. At the same time, he highlighted the inequity they had suffered. As the PIEA’s vote approached, Leedy offered a similar justification. Leedy employed an organic metaphor, stating, “[w]e’re like earthworms: We go in and fertilize an area, make it grow into a popular place, and then we are forced out later on” (Harris, 2007, June 20). The metaphor is apt. Earthworms play an important role in cultivating one’s garden, but their role is often unnoticed and unappreciated. Furthermore, the worms may be viewed more as pests than cultivators. Similarly, it would be easy to ignore the role of artists in the Crossroads’ development. It would be easy to simply view them as pests, rather than agents of development. One might suggest that earthworms can easily be replaced by modern innovations. Leedy also realized that artists could be replaced. About this he stated that, “[t]he only kind of gallery that will be able to survive in a gentrified Crossroads will be those that sell decorative art” (Harris, 2007 June 20). At the same time, real estate developer Aron emphasized that the Crossroads was “something the suburbs

can't offer" (Harris, 2007 June 20). Of course, the suburbs can readily offer the sort of "decorative art" to which Leedy refers. However, if the Crossroads only offered suburban-style art galleries (e.g., Thomas Kincaid galleries), Leedy believed it would lose its edge. And it was this edge that made it "different" and marketable. As outlined in chapter two, the district's bohemian ethos allowed it to interpellate producers and consumers. This interpellation was dependent on artists as a scenic element. In a final plea, Leedy contended that artists were a dichotomy between bohemian and economic urges. He stated that, "[w]e're not total rebels. We're artists and businessmen just trying to stay alive and remain an example that other cities can look to" (Harris, 2007 June 20). In addition to helping the neighborhood, the abatement would also help the city's national prestige. Here Leedy had a point. The Crossroads had attracted attention nationally and from other cities.

In 2007, 31 "art-related properties" in the Crossroads were granted tax abatements. *Kansas City Star* development reporter Kevin Collison explained the move in these terms: "The plan ... is intended to help artists and gallery owners remain in the neighborhood they pioneered more than 20 years ago" (Collison, 2007, October 30). The only way artists could attain economic justice was through rhetorical transformation. These artists became developers and business persons, worthy recipients of government aid under the reality posited by the neo-liberal occupational psychosis. However, after this struggle the assumed economic reality would be questioned.

Questioning the Realist Style

The artists' struggle to gain incentives highlighted flaws within the city's incentive practices. Developers had used the rhetoric of economic correctness to justify receiving incentives. These developers depended on statistical analyses which claimed to demonstrate the

need for incentives. Again, the developers would love to help out the city, but it would not be feasible without some government assistance. As Crossroads artists began speaking the rhetoric of economic correctness, actors inside and outside city government began to question the efficacy of these incentives. These dissenters claimed that the economic projections had been flawed, and the premises for awarding incentives had ignored more “blighted” areas.

The dissent came first from Mark Funkhouser, who had served as the city’s auditor before resigning to enter the 2007 mayoral race. During his successful mayoral campaign he criticized how incentives were allotted in Kansas City, a theme he would continue after taking office. Funkhouser’s criticism of the city’s incentive policies was supported by a report released by the city auditor’s office during his mayoral campaign. As Funkhouser attempted to indict the incentive policy, he was accused of merely seeking political gain. After all, his former office released a report that closely matched a major plank of his campaign. Such a cynical assessment ignores the possibility that Funkhouser had identified a genuine problem and sought office in order to remedy it. Not surprisingly, the city’s Economic Development Corporation argued that the report itself was flawed (Horsley, 2007, March 24). Shortly after Funkhouser took office, the PIEA reduced the tax abatement period for condominiums from 25 years to 10. Though the commission had previously considered reducing the abatements, the director stated that the change “also reflected the changing times with the new administration” (Collison, 2007, May 26). Reflecting on this policy shift, Funkhouser stated, “[a]t a certain point, you've primed the pump enough. Certainly in the Crossroads, with all the issues regarding assessments, part of that is we have over-subsidized the market there. I appreciate it. If they feel a new wind coming, I hope they feel a gale coming out of City Hall” (Collison, 2007, May 26). In addition to

Funkhouser, an outside group called Reclaimdemocracy.org began to call for changes in the city's incentive policies.

In early 2007, Reclaimdemocracy.org published a study that called Kansas City's TIF policies into question. The study was conducted by Michael P. Kelsay, a statistician in the economics department at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Kelsay's study drew attention to issues of race and class that had been largely ignored by the city. He found that TIF was mainly being used in areas that were predominantly white and fairly affluent. This included the Crossroads. In his study, Kelsay stated, “[t]he City Council districts that are disadvantaged across a number of socioeconomic factors have been granted the fewest number of TIF projects and districts. This contradicts the original intention of TIF which was to be a tool for economic development by giving an incentive for investment in the blighted areas where the market system was not working” (Kelsay, 2007, p. 6).

Furthermore, Kelsay did not see evidence that the city would sufficiently benefit from the tax revenue it was forfeiting in the name of economic development. It is notable that Kelsay, who teaches in an economics department, did not stick to the rhetoric of economic correctness. Among his six recommendations for TIF policy, two are notable for their deviation from the neoliberal frame. His first recommendation is that, “[i]f the Kansas City Council is to use economic development incentives to spur development, the poorer districts need to be given additional consideration in the TIF process” His second recommendation is even more striking: “[t]he City needs to implement a comprehensive TIF policy such that TIF is used to achieve clear and substantial public benefits while protecting the financial condition of the City. Consideration should be given to ‘social’ as well as fiscal elements of the policy” (Kelsay, 2007, Executive Summary).

In 2008, it appeared harder to obtain tax incentives in the Crossroads. This concerned Christina Boveri, a Crossroads-based real estate agent and publisher of a free magazine called *Urban Times*. She pleaded that, “[w]e’ve got to continue the development. It can’t stop. We need to continue giving incentives. They’re a must to continue development” ” (Downtown booster sees growth ahead, 2008, February 26). Three years earlier, Boveri had claimed her work was “beyond real estate. It’s more about the city and making a difference” (Collison, 2005 June 14). In the interim between this two statements, Kelsay’s 2007 study and the city auditors report had suggested that the city’s TIF policy was not helping the city. Instead of relying on evidence that would counter these reports, Boveri relied on her ethos as a real estate professional. She argued that, “[w]e have had a substantial amount of investment dollars coming from outside Kansas City, which tells us something. We let the core slide a long time, and now we’re seeing it come back” (Downtown booster sees growth ahead, 2008, February 26). In this statement, Boveri positions herself as someone who could explain the meaning behind recent downtown investments.

One of the most contentious TIF debates has concerned the Vitagraph building, which is part of the Old Film Row sub-district. The building is also near the city’s new Performing Arts Center. Shirley Helzberg, who purchased the Vitagraph building, had also spearheaded the effort to fund and build the Performing Arts Center. In 2008 she came to the TIF commission asking for incentives to help her renovate the Vitagraph building. When the measure came to a vote, the commission was split evenly (5-5). The commission’s main objection was that Helzberg sought to include a nearby restaurant in the tax incentive package. This was a problem for the commission because Helzberg had previously received tax incentives while renovating the restaurant. Following this vote, Helzberg stated, “I’m sorry some of the commissioners don’t

understand what this would do to bring more economic development to the area. They're not looking at the big picture” (Collison, 2008, June 12). With the commission deadlocked, the proposal was sent to a city council committee. However, the committee repeated the TIF commission’s concern that the Webster House restaurant should not be included in the new incentive package (Collison, 2008, July 31). This pared-down proposal would later be approved by the City Council (Collison, 2008, August 12).

It is worth noting that Helzberg promised economic development, but the Vitagraph Building would seem to have a negative impact on the city’s tax rolls. After the incentive package was approved, long-time Vitagraph tenant Chapman Recording left for a suburban studio in Kansas (Collison, 2009, January 13). The building ultimately attracted a corporate tenant in the form of marketing firm Global Prairie. But Global Prairie was already located elsewhere within the Crossroads Arts District. One might object that the Vitagraph has not attracted a new business to Kansas City, or even to the Crossroads. However, the deal obtained by Helzberg also meant the city will collect less tax revenue. Recalling the 2008 debate, a writer for *The Pitch* noted that, “[t]he city staff’s fears that the Vitagraph Building would merely rearrange jobs – not land new ones – appear to have been justified” (Martin, 2011, May 31). A few months after this, newly-elected Kansas City Mayor Sly James once again shook up the city’s TIF commission, only this time there was an element of déjà vu. The commission’s previous chairman, whom Funkhouser had ousted, was returned to lead the commission. At the same time, every single Funkhouser appointee, including Stretch and a member of Reclaimdemocracy.org, was replaced (Collison, 2011, August 4).

During Funkhouser’s one term as mayor, the city’s perceived economic reality was questioned. Developers had benefited from a system that was based on flawed data, as

demonstrated by the city auditor's office and Reclaimdemocracy.org. These reports revealed that the arguments behind incentive packages were often more quasi-logical than logical. In the face of these criticisms, developers like Shirley Helzberg maintained that they had more access to the machinations of the local economy.

Of course, the realist style is resistant to change. It is a style that presents its axiology as ontology, while eschewing the values of others as idealism. This displacement obscures the possibility that rhetors, in this case real estate developers, are merely offering one of many available economic perspectives. Beer and Hariman (1996) noted how in international relations the realist style had fostered a "trained incapacity in assessing processes of modernization, political economy, nationalism, and other determinants of foreign affairs" (p. 21). As such, the authors call for a post-realist approach that would consider what the realist perspective had taken for granted. Aune (2001) imported realism into the realm of economics to, I believe, create a post-realist perspective on economics. In the present case, there was a brief moment of post-realist crisis followed by an apparent return to economic realism.

Implications

The debate over tax incentives in the Crossroads Arts District reveals much about the nature of ethos within the neo-liberal occupational psychosis. In this context there are some actors who have inherent ethos, some who may acquire ethos through casuistic stretching, and still others for whom ethos is beyond reach.

Within the neoliberal occupational psychosis, business interests have inherent ethos. That is to say, they do not need to prove their endeavors will lead to economic growth. However, there will be some question as to whether a business endeavor will generate sufficient economic activity to justify public assistance. These actors are viewed as potentially increasing

the overall economic base within a jurisdiction, cities in the present case. This assumption allows businesses to avoid being labeled as parasites who are merely seeking handouts. This allows these actors to receive aidez-faire treatment.

Another group of actors might be able to receive aidez-faire treatment, but only after a process of rhetorical transformation. In the present case, artists were able to transform themselves into business persons. The transformed artist was a duality of entrepreneur and bohemian, a true model of what Richard Florida calls the creative class. Though many artists might see this transformation as unreasonable, it remains a viable option for them. It is an identity they may assume. This transformation affords artists the agency needed to receive aidez faire treatment.

There is still another large group for whom aidez-faire treatment is elusive. This group is, of course, the many impoverished individuals who seek government assistance. These individual lack access to the rhetoric of economic correctness, because their activities cannot be directly linked to economic growth. Under the rhetoric of economic correctness, the only position these individuals may assume is that of rent-seeking parasite. The arguments that were available to Crossroads artists are simply not available to these individuals. As pointed out in the ReclaimDemocracy.org report, there are many poorer neighborhoods that have received fewer TIF incentives. Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) contends that “[g]hetto areas may be rendered ‘invisible’ by their regional enclosure in neighborhoods having very low rates both of property transfer and of daily mobility in and out of those neighborhoods” (p. 130). Unlike the Crossroads, these neighborhoods are not inhabited by people who can easily leave. Remember, artist Stretch contended that artists empower themselves by simply moving on to the next neighborhood. In fact, he even advocated for moving east of Troost, the city’s historic racial

dividing line. This may sound like a call for racial unity, but it might be less pleasant for those who undergo gentrification. For those who cannot gain agency within the neoliberal occupational psychosis, being displaced is a much less romantic proposition.

As demonstrated in this chapter, urban development is driven by neoliberal economic concerns. Kansas City desperately sought developers who would lay down roots in blighted urban areas. This desperation led to the use of economic incentives to attract development. To be certain, the city did not automatically award incentives to developers. Instead, these developers needed to use rhetoric in order to convince the city their projects deserved assistance. In doing so, the developers drew upon the city's espoused goals and fears. Even though incentive applications were replete with technical language, they were also quite rhetorical in nature. The lesson here is that policymakers need to recognize the rhetoricity of policy debates that occur at all levels of government.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Introduction

This dissertation has explored the rhetorical dimensions of an urban renewal project in Kansas City. From a broader perspective, it has been about how communities are formed discursively. Neighborhoods, such as the Crossroads Arts District, are the outcome of discursive struggles, in which different actors articulate competing visions of the ideal community. These actors are dually constrained. They are, of course, constrained by self-interest, but also by the explicit and implicit norms that comprise what I have called the neo-liberal occupational psychosis. Since urban renewal is contrary to many of the established norms, its proponents have faced numerous struggles. These rhetorical skirmishes over urban renewal are present not only in Kansas City, but in cities throughout the U.S. To illustrate this, I will briefly address how the rhetoric of urban renewal has developed in three other Midwestern cities – Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Cincinnati.

In terms of urban renewal, Minneapolis has enjoyed enviable success. The city has achieved multi-modal transportation to an extent unimaginable in many Midwestern cities. Its Midtown Greenway serves bicycle commuters throughout the year, even in the winter when snowplows clear the trail for cyclists (Bleiberg & Cutler, 2011, July 22). Minneapolis also offers light rail transit, though this has been an increasingly contentious issue. A recent expansion of the line cut through a section of nearby St. Paul where artists have lived for 30 years. The artists, along with other members of the community, were worried that the rail line would raise the price of real estate in the area, forcing them out of the neighborhood. In fact, one workspace for artists had been converted into housing before the new rail line was even operational. In an article in the *Star Tribune*, one artist reminded the city that she and her colleagues were also running

businesses (Havens, 2010, November 30). In addition to gentrification, light rail advocates have faced opposition from Republicans in the state legislature. An attempt to block state funding for light rail expansion was stymied, but the Republican legislature made it clear that mass transit, a vital component of urban renewal, was not one of their priorities (Progress, hurdles for transit projects, 2011, September 19). Much like Minneapolis, mass transit has also played a role in the redevelopment of St. Louis.

St. Louis has become synonymous with urban decline, as its population has gone from 860,000 residents in 1950 (Saulny, 2007, April 17) to 319,000 in 2010. Though the city's population has declined, the suburbs of St. Louis have swelled (Gay & Robertson, 2011, February 24). Despite this dramatic population drop, St. Louis continues to aggressively pursue urban renewal projects. St. Louis began operating a light rail system in 1993 (Hick, 1993, July 31), but has had difficulty using it as a development tool (Gillerman, 2011, June 12). Much like their Kansas City counterparts, St. Louis developers have capitalized on an array of tax credits to renew "blighted" urban spaces. These actions have also received mixed reactions, as was the case in Kansas City. On St. Louis's northside, a developer has been accused of using these tax credits to pursue gentrification. Though the developer claimed to be concerned with helping the community and area schools, some critics found this hard to believe. One critic suggested that instead of commercial development, the developer should focus on improving existing conditions in the community (Druhe, 2009, October 1). Another critic suggested that the developer merely hoped to attract affluent residents, while displacing the existing impoverished population. St. Louis developers have had more luck converting a downtown shopping center into a mixed-use structure. This redevelopment project benefitted from a sparse downtown population, and a \$45 million loan from the department of Housing and Urban Development

(Bryant, 2010, May 19). Without many residents to displace, the project went forward without difficulty. The issue of displacing residents has also been prominent within Cincinnati's urban renewal efforts.

At first glance, Cincinnati's urban renewal efforts might seem utterly Sisyphean. The town has focused on rehabilitating its troubled Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, which in the early twenty-first century led the city in homicides (Garretson, 2003, January 11) and was full of vacant buildings (Osborne, 2001, November 20). Despite these issues, the city sought to rehabilitate the historic district through a public-private partnership with local banks. The first step was waiting for the expiration of federal contracts that provided subsidized rent in the area. From there, the city was able to incentivize what one city council member called "market housing" (Garretson, 2003, January 11), which included \$389,000 condominiums (Paeth, 2003, March 25). Over-the-Rhine also distinguished itself as a mecca for the arts when the Art Academy of Cincinnati relocated to the neighborhood in 2005 (Over-the-Rhine and Cincinnati, n.d.). As the school prepared for this move in 2003, its president remarked "I hope sometime in the not-too-distant future the scariest person you will see in Over-the-Rhine is an art student with a mohawk and tattoos" (Paeth, 2003, March 25). Cincinnati has also attached its rehabilitation hopes on mass transit, as it employed neoliberal premises to promote a proposed streetcar that would connect Over-the-Rhine with other urban Cincinnati neighborhoods (Driehaus, 2008, August 14; Vock, 2011, April 4). However, this project has been stalled after Republican Governor John Kasich cut funds that had been promised by his Democratic predecessor (Vock, 2011, April 4). In all three cities, the municipal government has been actively involved in encouraging urban rehabilitation. However, in none of these cities has progress come easy.

These Midwestern cities are obviously similar to Kansas City, but stories of urban renewal can be found throughout the U.S. In Los Angeles, the neighborhoods of Silver Lake and Echo Park have recently experienced gentrification (There goes the neighborhood). In the southeast U.S., Charlotte introduced light rail in its urban core in 2007 (Tierney, 2007, November 25). This immediately sparked discussion of expanding the service, along with encouraging mixed-use development near proposed stations (Cimino, 2007, November 25). Given the widespread national interest in urban renewal, the goal of this conclusion is two-fold. First, I want to assess what this dissertation helps us understand about Kansas City. Second, I want to take the lessons learned here and explore possible ramifications of this study on the national scene.

Kansas City

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that efforts to redevelop the Crossroads Arts District were haunted by the specter of suburbia. These challenges resulted from over a century of culture and policies. As demonstrated in chapter one, suburban living is the established norm in the U.S. This can be traced back to the 1800s, when streetcars gave birth to the commuter lifestyle. But suburbanization became normative after World War II, after the birth of the interstate and increased automobile ownership. These developments have rendered much of the U.S. dependent on personal automobiles and unfamiliar with public transportation. To attract these suburban emigres to renewed urban neighborhoods, urban renewal advocates must create new desires rather than contending with existing ones. As such, the rhetoric of urban renewal must be constitutive in nature. At the same time, the new narrative must function within the existing rules. First, the specter of suburbia is always lurking in the background, reminding potential adherents what they will be leaving behind. Second, the rhetors must adhere to implicit

and explicit norms that privilege business concerns over other concerns. Promoters of the Crossroads could have constituted a vibrant urban community free of all types of segregation. Or, they could have constituted a collaborative environment, where stakeholders work in concert to establish and advance shared goals. Instead, the rhetoric of urban renewal in Kansas City has operated within the existing neoliberal occupational psychosis, which has been evident in how the city sought to populate the Crossroads, rebuild its infrastructure and allocate resources.

In chapter two I argued that the identity of the Crossroads has changed dramatically. This change has been facilitated through constitutive rhetoric, which interpellates new middle-class residents as members of a bohemian creative class. However, this change might have been easily ignored, as the two incarnations shared some apparent similarities. The neighborhood was originally populated by artists who sought a place to experiment. As its population grew, the Crossroads became home to the sort of “knowledge workers” urban theorist Richard Florida calls the creative class. The creative class is, indeed, involved in art, but in a commercial sense. These knowledge workers can be found in advertising agencies, marketing firms, video production firms, and other creative services professions. While these commercial artists may sometimes share the bohemian aesthetic of fine artists, there are more fundamental differences between the two groups. First, the creative class seeks out jobs that offer stable incomes. Second, and more important, the creative class works toward different ends. Those involved in fine arts are typically involved in conceiving both the artistic message and the aesthetic. In contrast, creative class members create on behalf of commercial interests.

In chapter three I argued that infrastructure is imbued with symbolism and plays a crucial role in urban renewal. To compete with suburbia, including suburban-style new urbanism, the Crossroads Arts District needed to be an authentically urban place. To elucidate this, I drew

upon de Certeau's (1984) distinction between spaces and places. De Certeau viewed places as stable and rigid, while spaces were more spontaneous and afford individuals a higher degree of agency. While de Certeau's distinction was worthwhile, it did not sufficiently explain the rhetoric of urban renewal in Kansas City. The Kansas City metropolitan area is dominated by suburban developments, which complicates the dichotomy between place and space. This was demonstrated by examining the infrastructure efforts within the neighborhood, and how they would have appealed to two different audiences. Those who lived in the Crossroads Arts District since its early days might view the interventions as reducing their autonomy. However, such individuals were not the city's target audience. Rather, the city wished to attract new residents who could afford luxury apartments or condominiums. If these individuals moved from the sort of suburban neighborhood where most Americans live, the Crossroads would have seemed like a space. These suburban emigres exited a state of automobility and entered a space where multi-modal agency was possible. At the same time, these suburban emigres might have been reluctant to exit the stability of a suburban place. In the Crossroads, various measures were taken to increase the ontological security of new residents. For example, condominiums emphasized the security of their buildings. The neighborhood has also sought to establish a Community Improvement District, which would provide security beyond that of the public police force.

In chapter four, I addressed how public funds were allotted for the neighborhood. This required me to look at proposals for tax incentives, along with the larger debate over tax incentives in Kansas City. I argued that the incentives relied on what Aune (2001) calls the "rhetoric of economic correctness," which is characterized by quasi-logical arguments and a realist style. This "rhetoric of economic correctness" allowed the city to justify the use of public money, by diverting tax revenues, for the sake of future economic growth. The city was placing

a bet that urban developments, such as those in the Crossroads, needed a bit of stimulus before they could become sustainable. To jumpstart these developments, the city issued bonds that would be paid off by taxes generated by the projects. Furthermore, the developments would ultimately be a source of tax revenue. This method of incentivizing new projects was dominant until Mark Funkhouser became mayor in 2007 and attempted to alter the process. Funkhouser was bolstered by public and private reports that suggested tax incentives were ineffective and not actually serving the public good. In the face of such criticism, some developers in the district continued to employ the realist style, claiming that opponents did not “understand” how the economy worked. These developers did not offer an explanation of economic reality, instead depending on their ethos.

Taken together, the neighborhood’s changing identity, infrastructure improvements, and resource allocation demonstrate the role of neo-liberal policies within the Crossroads Arts District. The city has operated from a position of weakness, which has necessitated a symbiotic relationship with private commercial interests. In this public-private partnership, it is sometimes difficult to determine who is the majority partner. Also, is it a long-term partnership, or merely a short-term relationship of convenience? If downtown Kansas City’s revitalization is based solely on incentivized private development, then it is quite tenuous. When the incentives dry up, the businesses could depart for richer pastures. Remember, the city is betting that after the incentive period the neighborhood will be a self-sustaining source of economic revenue, not requiring incentives. This arrangement creates a sort of house of cards, wherein progress could easily be erased. One way to address this may be by introducing more stability. In terms of infrastructure, the city is currently pressing forward with plans for a streetcar that would serve the Crossroads and other parts of downtown. The proposal has the support of the city’s current mayor, Sly

James, but its financing is still being finalized (Collison, 2011, November 28). Grand Boulevard, a major Crossroads thoroughfare, is also slated for improvements that would make it more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly (Collison, 2011, June 21). The introduction of cultural institutions might also increase stability within the neighborhood. The Crossroads is now home to a performing arts center, and the University of Missouri – Kansas City has discussed relocating its Conservatory of Music and Dance to the area (UMKC hires firms for downtown arts campus study, 2011, December 22). These changes are focused on bringing more people to the neighborhood.

Indeed, another way to understand this project is by focusing on the problems faced by each of the three interested parties – the people, the government, and businesses. The Crossroads is home to two distinct populations – artists and the creative class – who are pursuing different projects. Artists are more likely to view the neighborhood as a transitional place where they can go from art student to being a working artist. This liminal position is not particularly amenable to citizenship. Unlike long-term residents, these artists may not desire a stable, place-like neighborhood. To such a population, infrastructure improvements might not justify a higher cost of living. In addition to monetary concerns, Crossroads artists might also feel co-opted by developers who reference the arts in marketing materials. In fact, some artists have left the Crossroads to settle other urban frontiers, such as the West Bottoms neighborhood. Long-time Crossroads fixture the Dolphin Gallery made such a move, with the established Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art taking over its Crossroads address (Thorson, 2008, September 14). Despite this co-optation, artists still possessed the agency necessary to relocate. Those who chose to stay in the neighborhood faced what they and their supporters perceived as economic injustice. The artists' incentivized neighbors were avoiding property taxes while simultaneously driving up the

value of neighborhood properties. This resulted in the artists, the progenitors of the neighborhood, facing increased property taxes. To remedy this economic injustice, artists and their supporters eventually resorted to what Aune (2001) calls the rhetoric of economic correctness. Artists began to argue that they were adding to the neighborhood's economic growth, just like their incentivized neighbors.

Though artists provided the neighborhood's identity, the creative class has also invested in the neighborhood. Many creative class residents have purchased condominiums, rather than renting. Creative services companies have signed leases and set-up offices in the neighborhood. With this investment also comes an interest in the long-term health of the neighborhood. For these newcomers, the Crossroads is not merely a stop-off point, but a place in which they can pursue personal and professional projects. As many of these newcomers are likely to be suburban emigres, the Crossroads, or any urban neighborhood, will have space-like qualities. That is, the neighborhood will afford suburban emigres a "pedestrian gaze" (Dickinson, 1997) by replacing automobility with multi-modal agency. This is an ontological change that immerses individuals into a sea of humanity outside of the insularity of personal automobiles. After assuming the "pedestrian gaze," individuals will be in closer contact with the built environment, natural environment and other citizens. The problem, it seems, is to what extent does one wish to compromise her ontological security? Spaces afford one novel experiences, which could be negative or positive in nature. Happening upon a fascinating street performer would be a positive experience, not found in contrived suburban places. Being mugged on the way home from dinner would, obviously, be a negative experience. To allay these fears, neighborhoods may introduce place-making practices that serve as an ontological security net. A Community Improvement District could provide extra security patrols, which would allow residents to walk

in the city without fearing negative experiences. Indeed, the Crossroads has discussed instituting a CID so the neighborhood would seem safer (Hendricks, 2008, October 15). Meanwhile, private residential properties have promoted their own security measures, such as secured entrances and private patrols. These are extra-governmental measures, which afford one area more security than its neighbors. However, such measures also afford the city a relatively-safe neighborhood without increasing governmental expenditures.

Indeed, the city has treated the Crossroads as an economic opportunity. Prior to the Crossroads building boom, the city had been searching desperately for a way to rehabilitate its downtown. This had primarily involved creating destinations geared toward visitors, rather than mixed-use neighborhoods. While the city looked for the next big project, a group of artists had turned warehouses into spaces for living and working. Eventually, developers expressed interest in converting some of the neighborhood's warehouses into lofts. When these developers asked for economic incentives, the city was receptive to their pleas. The city declared the whole neighborhood "blighted" in 2007 (Kansas City Council Record, 2007, March 29), even though it was experiencing a period of renewal. This designation allowed the city to approve economic incentives intended to rehabilitate a desperate neighborhood. These incentives demonstrated how ethos is developed within the neoliberal occupational psychosis. The city needed to speak the language of economic growth in order to achieve its development goals. Rather than regulating developers, the city attached restrictions to incentive packages. In order to receive tax breaks, developers needed to follow design guidelines meant to transform the Crossroads from a disjointed warehouse district into a network of urban streetscapes. Only by issuing incentives could the city achieve the sort of regulatory actions commonly associated with a municipality. This all happened with the backdrop of urban decline. Given that the city had been losing

residents and employers to its suburbs, particularly Johnson County, Kansas, it seemed there was little other choice.

Businesses operating within the Crossroads were aware of the city's weakened state. This was evident when an incentive proposal alluded to the possibility that employers might move to "another state" (19th and Central Tax Increment Financing Plan, 1999). In the neoliberal occupational psychosis, businesses came to the negotiating table with inherent ethos. In this context, actors who might eventually add to overall economic activity can seek government aid without being branded as parasites. This demonstrates the *aidez-faire* nature of neoliberal economics (Purcell, 2009). While artists received *laissez-faire* treatment, businesses received a helping hand from the government. By pursuing urban development projects, businesses are pursuing riskier projects than suburban development. Recall that in 2005 local real estate agent Christina Boveri said her work was "beyond real estate. It's more about the city and making a difference" (Collison, 2005, June 14). In 2008, as it looked like property tax abatements for condominiums might dry up, Boveri insisted that incentives were "a must to continue development" (Downtown booster sees growth ahead, 2008, February 26). Apparently, it did not matter to her that the city auditor's office and an outside group had found that the incentives were ineffective and failed to serve the public good. Instead, in keeping with the realist style, she relied on her professional ethos to support her assertions.

These three disparate groups have all approached urban renewal with different primary goals. For example, artists have sought affordable spaces for working and living. The creative class residents have also sought to pursue their personal and professional lives within the neighborhood. The city is primarily interested in how a neglected neighborhood can be rehabilitated and transformed into a source of tax revenue. Developers are primarily interested

in earning a profit from the sale of their products. So where do these different projects intersect, and who should point out the areas of intersection? The obvious choice would be the city, since it is in the business of governing. Rather than leveraging a public-private partnership, the city could pursue a more complete coalition of stakeholders. To accomplish this, the city would need to do more than point to abstract notions of shared fate and interconnectedness. Rather, the city must demonstrate how its fate is intertwined with that of artists and developers. This may seem like a difficult task, but Kansas City may take solace in knowing that other cities are also facing these issues. Having re-examined the rhetoric of urban renewal in the Crossroads Arts District, I will turn my gaze now to the larger national scene.

What might other cities learn?

The relative success of the Crossroads Arts District provides lessons for other cities that wish to rehabilitate urban neighborhoods. First, other cities should take note of how Kansas City eventually realized the opportunity to market the neighborhood through its existing arts community. Second, the Crossroads experience demonstrates the importance of building coalitions that involve the various stakeholders of the neighborhood. Third, the experience demonstrates that cities should embrace the urban nature of their neighborhoods. The most *unsuburban* features of the neighborhoods should be highlighted. Finally, the Crossroads experience also demonstrates the importance of stability when rehabilitating a neighborhood. The city has been trying to implement the sort of infrastructure that would make the neighborhood a stable place, rather than a chaotic space.

As other cities look to Kansas City for guidance, they should consider how the city used the ethos of the existing arts community to create a neighborhood identity. The Crossroads was not merely a collection of condominiums, but a neighborhood organized around a theme. This

theme was reified by the monthly First Friday events that highlighted art galleries. The theme was further reinforced when creative services firms moved to the neighborhood, though this also represented a clash of identities. Not all cities will have the same opportunity, but they should seize upon opportunities to organize a neighborhood around a cohesive theme. In the process, however, cities should also make sure that the evolution of the neighborhood involves all stakeholders.

The artists of the Crossroads Arts District found their position tenuous after their property taxes increased dramatically, while the newcomers driving property values received tax abatements. Though artists eventually received tax abatements, it came only after a rhetorical battle. This was short-sighted on the part of the city. Cities might be able to avoid this scenario by building coalitions early in the process. By this, I mean more than holding public hearings on tax incentive packages. Instead, cities should try to bring in a variety of stakeholders while crafting incentive packages.

As demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the specter of suburbia looms large in urban renewal. Since most people currently live in suburban environments, urban renewal projects will need to attract suburban émigrés. In doing so, cities must realize these individuals will not be seeking the same old suburban environments. Cities must make sure their zoning laws and codes actually constitute an urban environment, rather than suburbia-light. For example, Kansas City found that development in the Crossroads had actually been stymied by off-street parking requirements. Businesses had wanted to enter the neighborhood, but could not afford the additional cost of maintaining a neighborhood. This went against the city's belief that businesses would need to offer parking. Hence, there was a mismatch between the city's suburban parking requirements and the urban neighborhood it was attempting to foster.

Finally, the Crossroads Arts District demonstrates the importance of infrastructure in urban development. Cities must make sure their zoning codes actually match the types of neighborhoods they believe will attract new residents. Kansas City had imposed minimum parking restrictions that were out of place within an urban environment. Such regulations might encourage businesses to actually create parking lots, which would disrupt the urban streetscape. To foster a stable neighborhood, cities should be certain their policies will not contradict their espoused plans for a neighborhood.

Urban Renewal in the U.S.

Urban renewal advocates continue to face myriad issues as they attempt to rehabilitate depopulated cities throughout the U.S. In this section I first address the issues that currently face advocates. I then turn to issues that will emerge in the future before considering what other cities may learn from this study. As urban renewal takes shape in American cities, its advocates are currently struggling to persuade people about how the movement promotes sustainability, countering resistance, repopulating cities, avoiding uneven development, and encouraging the use of public transportation.

It would be easy to conclude in a priori fashion that cities are naturally associated with sustainability. When people live in denser environments that are amenable to multi-modal transit, they will likely use less energy than their suburban counterparts. Dense urban development also means more rural lands will be left undeveloped. As Kaid Benfield, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Sustainable Communities program, puts it, "the more development we encourage within our existing communities, the less goes across the countryside" (Benfield, 2011, December 6). To this end, cities have received help from the Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Network, which consists of state and federal

agencies, along with non-profit organizations focused on both real estate development and environmental preservation (Network Partners, n.d.). On its Web site the EPA offers Smart Growth principles that highlight the connections between urban development and sustainability – “mix land uses,” “create walkable neighborhoods,” and “provide a variety of transportation choices” (About Smart Growth, n.d.). The difficulty, it seems, will be to convince Americans that urban lifestyles are green lifestyles. A recent study from the Pew Research Center found that 68 percent of Americans view the availability of green products as a positive societal change (Millenials’ judgments about recent social trends not so different, 2010, January 7). However, urban renewal advocates should realize that an increased interest in sustainability will not automatically result in an increased interest in urban living. There are a plethora of options that would allow one to claim the mantle of sustainability while pursuing a wholly suburban existence – LEED-certified buildings, hybrid cars, and energy efficient appliances. To further demonstrate the current disconnect between sustainability and urban renewal, a representative anecdote is in order.

In 2011, an organization that was very committed to the environment announced that it would be relocating from its current urban location in Kansas City, Kansas, to a suburban building that had received the designation of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (EPA Green Buildings; Kansas City, Kansas Region 7 Office, n.d.). This sort of move would be controversial for any organization that promotes its commitment to the environment. This move, however, was particularly controversial because the organization was the EPA – the federal agency charged with protecting the environment. Furthermore, the EPA had promoted Smart Growth as an environmentally-friendly practice. Now its regional office planned to

relocate from a location that was pedestrian- and transit-friendly, to a location that was very automobile-dependent.

The EPA's planned move did not go over well with the NRDC's Benefield. On both his NRDC blog and the web site of *The Atlantic*, Benefield denounced the EPA, his Smart Growth Partner. Benefield asserted that,

In defiance of the environmental values it supposedly stands for, the federal Environmental Protection Agency is moving its regional headquarters from a walkable, transit-rich, downtown Kansas City (Kansas) neighborhood to one of the worst examples of suburban sprawl it could have possibly found, some 20 miles from downtown.

(Benefield A, 2011, April 18a; Benefield B, 2011, April 18b).

Benefield utilized readily-available technology to demonstrate how the EPA's move would violate its own principles. By juxtaposing two satellite pictures, he showed the difference between the dense grid of Kansas City, Kansas, and the sprawl of the new location. Benefield also used the online tools Walk Score and ABOGO, to demonstrate differences in walkability and carbon emissions, respectively. Benefield defiantly reminded the government that, "This is not just some random corporation making a crappy location decision: this is the agency charged with protecting the environment for the United States of America" (Benefield A, 2011, April 18a; Benefield B, 2011, April 18b). Regardless of this information, the EPA appears to be moving forward with its suburban location, though its Web site does note that the new building is "is within a quarter mile of three bus stops" (Kansas City, Kansas Region 7 Office, n.d.).

The EPA controversy provides two lessons. First, rhetorically linking sustainability and urban environments will not be an easy task. The connection between the two is not as obvious as some might think. Even the EPA viewed an urban location as merely one approach to

sustainability, rather than as an integral component of sustainability. Second, Benefield also demonstrated how readily-available technology may be used to illustrate the connections between sustainability and urban environments. To the extent that audiences are receptive to the notion of sustainability, this sort of approach could prove useful. However, urban renewal advocates will also need to deal with political actors for whom sustainability is not important.

As environmentalists criticized the EPA's planned move, the conservative *Washington Times* newspaper ran an editorial titled "EPA suburban sprawl brawl. Global warming agency's carbon footprint deepens in greener pastures." This editorial points out the criticism from the NRDC, which it labels a "neo-druid" group. It also laments that the "Kansas City building lacks trendy new labels like 'Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design' rating. The editorial concludes by remarking that, "As EPA muddles through the maze of contradictory rules of its own making, Americans can take some satisfaction in knowing that the regulacrats for once are getting a taste of their own medicine" (Editorial: EPA suburban sprawl brawl, 2011, April 26). These comments are consistent with a larger conservative narrative that favors continued suburban development, while viewing cities as something from the past. The Smart Growth movement and urban renewal in general have been attacked by authors representing the libertarian CATO Institute and conservative Heritage Foundation. The authors rely on a variety of familiar topoi, but what is most striking is the realist style employed within the anti-urban treatises. The authors claim that cities, and everything that goes with them, are not what people want. This appraisal of housing trends ignores the rhetoric that made suburbia normative, instead treating it as a natural human desire. Again, we see axiology (i.e., suburbs are good) promoted up to ontology (i.e., people are suburban). To demonstrate this, I will briefly consider

how libertarian and conservative commentators have used the realist style to argue against urban renewal efforts.

The realist style employed by critics of urban renewal is linked closely to the concept of the free market. The CATO institute's Randall O'Toole cites statistics that show a low percentage of the public uses mass transit. He also asserts that Portland, a city praised in urban renewal circles, was not able to achieve transit-oriented development without incentives (2011, December 9). The Heritage Foundation's Wendell Cox describes Smart Growth legislation in these terms: "The assumption behind the provisions is that Washington can lower the nation's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by re-creating the crowded living conditions and limited transportation options Americans have fled for generations" (Cox, 2010, July 27). Both O'Toole and Cox are quick to emphasize that Americans are not fond of mass transit and high-density housing. However, these arguments treat these actions as natural outcomes of a free market, without the interference of any external actors. These realist arguments are what urban renewal is up against. Perhaps this is why cities have seen the need to market their urban cores as something hip and contrary to existing norms.

To be clear, cities face steep challenges when attempting to bring people back to urban cores. Perhaps no city knows this better than Detroit, which has gone from one of the United States' biggest cities to one of its most troubled. In Detroit, many people have simply abandoned their houses and started over somewhere else. The amount of abandoned houses in Detroit has prompted Mayor David Bing to embark on a controversial plan to demolish 10,000 buildings in his first term. The effort even includes upscale neighborhoods, such as the boyhood home of former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney (Kellog, 2010, May 13). What is most striking is that even in the wake of this dystopian scene, there has been renewed interest in urban Detroit.

In an effort to attract younger workers, Quicken Loans recently relocated to downtown Detroit. The company's CEO explained, "there is an opportunity cost of not being in an urban environment" (Vanderkam, 2011, July 14). Considering the problems endured by urban Detroit, this move is quite remarkable.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the twentieth century saw much uneven development within American metropolitan areas. Gotham (2002) has documented how Kansas City once had residential streets that were mixed race and mixed income. Throughout the 20th century, the trend was toward segregation by income and race (Jackson, 1985). The result was a concentration of poverty within specific sections of metropolitan areas, rather than poverty being distributed. This income segregation has important implications for social mobility in the U.S. . School districts where wealth is concentrated have a stronger tax base, whereas impoverished districts are more dependent on outside funding (Gotham, 2002). The concentration of wealth and poverty also has broader societal implications. Children who grow up in wealthy areas might view poverty as an abstract concept. Even more troubling, children who grow up in impoverished areas may find poverty to be normative and social mobility to be elusive. A 2009 report by the Pew Charitable Trusts' Economic Mobility Project found that living in an impoverished neighborhood explained why many African-Americans had not moved up the economic ladder as quickly as whites. The report specifically stated, "Neighborhood poverty alone accounts for a greater portion of the black-white downward mobility gap than the effects of parental education, occupation, labor force participation, and a range of other family characteristics combined" (Sharkey, 2009).

Population density is the fundamental difference between cities and suburbs. To make this density work, people must become less dependent on personal automobiles. That is, they

must begin to see walking as their basic mode of transit. For this to work, cities must offer a variety of transit options that complement pedestrianism. Throughout much of the U.S., however, using public transit is a foreign concept. To combat this, a variety of efforts have been enacted. The Federal Transit Administration has promoted Transit-Oriented Development, which it describes as “compact, mixed-use development near transit facilities and high-quality walking environments” (Transit-Oriented Development, n.d.). This is also addressed by the non-profit organization the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, which is focused on “creating attractive, walkable, sustainable communities that allow residents to have housing and transportation choices and to live convenient, affordable, pleasant lives – with places for our kids to play and for our parents to grow old comfortably” (Welcome, n.d.). The group Transportation for America has a similar mission.

Just as demonstrated above, opponents of urban renewal use the realist style to oppose expansions to mass transit. Using mass transit is, in this view, contrary to the natural desires of humans. This is demonstrated when Randall O’Toole and others point to the low ridership numbers of transit services throughout the country. The contention is that automobiles and mass transit are competing in a free market, and the public has clearly chosen the automobile. This view ignores the possibility that the deck has been stacked in favor of the automobile. Transit-Oriented Development is an attempt to correct this arrangement, by introducing more developments amenable to pedestrians and transit users.

Considered together, it would seem urban renewal advocates face many current struggles. Even an obvious advantage, sustainability, has been hard to seize upon. Meanwhile, they have faced opposition from conservatives and libertarians who see no need to deviate from the suburban trajectory. Perhaps this is why the rhetoric of urban renewal has been constitutive. To

get people to live or work in blighted areas, such as downtown Detroit, the image of urban space has needed to be reconstituted. Instead of being distressed dystopias, neglected urban cores can now be seen as hip frontiers – places where one can transcend the norms of suburbia. Mass transit will also need an image makeover if urban renewal is to be successful. Riding transit can no longer be the refuge of the poor, but instead part of one's identity as an urbanite. Cities have addressed this by introducing new transit options, such as bus rapid transit, light rail and modern streetcars. Even as these issues continue to vex urban renewal advocates, a slew of new challenges will need to be addressed. Urban renewal advocates should realize the consubstantiality between cities and inner-ring suburbs, rather than pitting the two against each other. In many cases, these suburbs have implemented or proposed plans for urban-style infill. Furthermore, these inner-ring suburbs are beginning to experience problems that were once thought to be exclusively urban. Both of these issues point to a need for regional planning, which will be no small task. It will be in the best interest of cities to reassert themselves as the anchors of their metropolitan areas. Back in the city proper, there will be myriad problems that will need to be addressed. Some cities may find themselves with large swaths of abandoned properties, which they will not be easy to fill. Figuring out what to do with these vacant properties, and how to fund them, should prove rather challenging. In some cases this may lead to the emergence of quasi-public spaces. Segregation, an issue addressed above, will become more salient as the U.S. edges toward a majority-minority population.

Urban renewal advocates should keep in mind that suburbs are in the midst of an existential crisis as they develop problems once thought to be exclusively urban. This is particularly true as suburbs determine how to provide mass transit options to people who cannot afford a car, or who prefer not to drive regularly. Once the home of the middle class, the suburbs

are now populated by many people classified as poor (Allard & Roth, 2010, October) or “near poor” (DeParle, Gebeloff, and Tavernise, 2011, November 18). This change can be attributed partially to the department of Housing and Urban Development’s introduction of “Housing Choice Vouchers” in the 1990s, which afforded recipients more suburban housing options (Covington, Freeman & Stoll, 2011, October). However, once in suburbia, impoverished individuals may find a disconnect between the promises of suburbia and its reality. This is particularly true for those individuals who cannot afford a car, as the suburbs simply were not built for pedestrians or transit users. The organization Transportation for America documented how suburban streets were not safe for pedestrians in its report *Dangerous by Design 2011* (Ernst, et al, 2011). The issue also gained national attention in 2011 when a suburban Atlanta woman was convicted of vehicular homicide after her child was hit by a car. This case was fascinating because the woman was not driving a car; rather, she was crossing a suburban street after exiting a bus (Simmons, 2011, August 18). In addition to impoverished populations, aging suburbanites will also need pedestrian and transit infrastructure, as they lose the ability to drive. Furthermore, a growing segment of young persons has shown less interest in owning personal automobiles.

By working with inner-ring suburbs, urban renewal advocates could expand the overall urban environment of a metropolitan area. The challenge will be to demonstrate the shared substance between aging suburbs and urban cores. A good starting point would be the need for pedestrian and transit infrastructure in both. At the same time, this points to a need for increased regional planning within metropolitan areas. As demonstrated in chapter four, there is sometimes a tense relationship between cities and their suburbs. These municipalities compete for resources, residents and employers. The result can be a race to the bottom, wherein the entity

willing to sacrifice the most tax revenue “wins.” To avoid the disruptions caused by this sort of competition, cities and suburbs would need to engage in more regional planning. That is, they will need to collaboratively decide how each entity can best serve the larger metropolitan area. In addition to the distribution of employment, this would also include the development of regional transit systems. Of course, struggling cities may have trouble convincing far-flung, prosperous suburbs to join such an effort. As such, regional planning might mean a coalition of anchor cities and the aforementioned inner-ring suburbs. This sort of planning will require anchor cities to demonstrate that inner-ring suburbs have more in common with cities than exurbs. Such realignment would also allow cities to increase their ethos within the metropolitan context. Having considered the possible expansion of urban space, I turn now to problems that will be faced within existing urban areas.

As stated above, Detroit’s mayor plans to demolish 10,000 abandoned houses. This prompts the question of what will be done with the vacant lots? If these lots are left empty, they could become eye sores, especially if cash-strapped cities cannot afford the extra yard maintenance. One way for cities to avoid these extra costs would be to simply give away the vacant lots. For example, the lots could be gifted to a charity that would build new homes for the less-fortunate, such as Habitat for Humanity. Another option would be to turn the lots over to neighborhood associations, who would determine the best use of the spaces. A neighborhood group could then collaborate with area nonprofits to construct small parks, community gardens or non-profit retail. To facilitate this, cities will also need to make zoning laws more flexible. In addition, cities should be certain that a viable and democratic neighborhood organization is in place before turning over the properties. This approach would allow cities to expand the amount

of public space available, while minimizing expenses. Another approach to public space that has more rhetorical implications is to encourage quasi-public space.

In the neo-liberal occupational psychosis, cities have become increasingly dependent upon private companies. In Chapter Three, I mentioned how a private company had established a “community garden” in the Crossroads Arts District. This is a quasi-public space that has only the veneer of public space. This issue has been highlighted by the recent Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City. The protesters set up camp in Zucotti Park, which is actually owned by a private company (Berg, 2011, September 29). Another example of the blurring of public-private space happened in Salt Lake City. In 2009, two gay men were detained by security guards after a display of affection on land owned by the LDS church. The two men were ultimately cited for trespassing by the Salt Lake City Police Department. To make the issue more complicated, the land was a public space until a 2003 land-swap deal. The two men contended that heterosexual couples had engaged in similar activities without any ramifications (Whitehurst, L., 2009, July 10). In these two cases, private organizations own spaces that appear public. In other cases, private security forces funded by Community Improvement Districts may regulate public streets. In Kansas City, the Westport CID has adopted the practice of banning individuals from neighborhood businesses. Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union has stepped in to represent an individual who claims to have been cited for trespassing while walking on a public street in Westport (Martin, 2011, July 29). In quasi-public spaces, there is a sharp distinction between access and what de Certeau has called enunciation. While these spaces may welcome the public that does not mean one may behave as if she is in public. When control is turned over to undemocratic entities, there is also a risk of perpetuating segregation within the city.

Ethnic enclaves, in addition to racial segregation, marked the golden age of the American city. Due to policies that originated with the FHA (Jackson, 1985), American cities continue to be racialized spaces (Gotham, 2002). As the U.S. is predicted to be a majority-minority nation by 2050, this issue will persist (Roberts, 2009, December 17). This is an exigence, however, that can be addressed through rhetoric. Cities should be aware of language that marginalizes segments of the population, such as the Cincinnati councilman's use of the term "market housing." This phrase highlights the undesirability of residents who receive various forms of housing aid. The implication is that these subsidized persons should not be integrated within neighborhoods, but rather subsidized housing should be clustered. To do this in neighborhoods, such as Over the Rhine, is to perpetuate the sort of income segregation that characterized twentieth century suburbanization. At the same time, it does not allow recipients of subsidies to have a view of a different life. Instead, cities should work toward creating mixed-income neighborhoods. Furthermore, cities could make sure neighborhood organizations involve all stakeholders, including renters.

Conclusion

In this study I have addressed several issues of interest to students of rhetoric and public affairs. I have demonstrated how discourses shape the material world in a way that is experienced by wide swaths of the audience. The policies, and their subsequent effects, are observable by people within communities. This is not to say that other discourses are inconsequential. The foreign policy decisions of our leaders obviously have huge effects on our lives. However, much foreign policy ends up seeming rather abstract. With urban policy, the effects can be more direct. Establishing on-street bicycle lanes will directly affect cyclists, motorists and other stakeholders. Though it would be tempting to call the rhetoric of urban

renewal provincial or episodic, it affords the opportunity to consider how discourses function within concrete, material communities. More specifically, there are implications for the realist style. Beer and Harriman (1996) documented how the realist style has been a dominant discursive strain in international relations. This is not surprising, because it is ideally suited for international relations, in which policy experts tell a domestic audience about what is happening “over there.” In urban policy rhetoric, realist rhetors are at a disadvantage because there is no “over there.” The audience oftentimes lives within the context that realist rhetors purport to describe.

It is hard to predict whether the repopulation of cities will result in an expansion of the public sphere, but the potential is there. In cities, residents must rely on their feet as the primary mode of transit. This means being immersed within a sea of humanity, instead of the insularity of an automobile. The problems one might wish to ignore, such as homelessness, are more salient from the pedestrian gaze. The urban context might also present more opportunities for one to meet her neighbors, as she is likely to frequent restaurants and shops within walking distance of her home. When neighbors meet, a major *topoi* is likely to be the problems of the neighborhood. Far from provincial, the rhetoric of urban renewal provides opportunities to analyze how discourses function within specific communities. It is also important because it is closely related to issues facing local and national communities.

In the late twentieth century, Robert Putnam began to voice concerns about the decline of community and civic engagement. During the same time period, another set of scholars began to emphasize the importance of third places. In both cases, the fundamental problem was the increasingly atomized nature of society. Individuals viewed themselves as autonomous beings, pursuing only their own narrow projects. Urban renewal could be a remedy to both of these

problems. As mentioned above, urban inhabitants have fewer opportunities to insulate themselves from others and their problems.

The rhetoric of urban renewal also has implications for the environmental health of the planet. If Americans begin living in denser environments, then they might begin to use less energy. Instead of driving a hybrid car to the store, urban residents could simply walk. In addition to the health of the environment, some believe urban renewal might help address the obesity epidemic in the U.S. The suspicion here is that urbanites integrate activity into their everyday lives. Instead of driving to the gym, one could simply walk to work.

Finally, urban renewal could be a remedy for the sort of sprawl that disproportionately affects poor people. Even if income segregation continues to be the reality for most metropolitan areas, denser environments will erase the sprawl between poor and affluent neighborhoods. This matters because the affluent neighborhoods offer a variety of entry-level service industry jobs. Right now, many metropolitan areas suffer from what the Brookings Institution has labeled “job sprawl,” wherein the poor are not likely to live near jobs. The poor are more likely to live in cities and inner-ring suburbs, whereas jobs have moved further out in the suburban landscape. To exacerbate the situation, the poor are more likely to rely on public transportation, which is not abundant within suburbia (Raphael & Stoll, 2010, March). The *Wall Street Journal* recently highlighted a man in Detroit who spent hours traveling on public buses to his janitorial job at a suburban grocery store (Dolan, 2011, December 16). People in this situation forfeit large portions of their day to simply travel to work. One report from Brookings noted that African-Americans are more likely to experience a “spatial mismatch” between where they live and where jobs are located (Stoll, 2005, February). In a cruel twist, another Brookings report reveals that white collar jobs, like insurance and financial services, are more likely to be found in central

business districts while blue collar jobs, such as manufacturing and retail, are more decentralized (Kneebone, 2009, April). The working poor are being asked to forfeit much of their private lives for the sake of commuting.

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